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THE PULPIT ORATOR.

CONTAINING SEVEN ELABORATE SKELETON SERMONS,

OR,

HOMILETIC, DOGMATICAL, LITURGICAL, SYMBOLICAL, AND MORAL SKETCHES,

FOR EVERY SUNDAY OF THE YEAR.

ALSO ELABORATE SKELETON SERMONS

FOR THE CHIEF FESTIVALS AND OTHER OCCASIONS.

WITHDRAWN

BY THE REV. JOHN EVANGELIST ZOLLNER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, WITH PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, AND ADAPTED BY

THE REV. AUGUSTINE WIRTH, O. S. B.

WITH PREFACE BY THE REV. A. A. LAMBING.

ELEVENTH REVISED EDITION.

VOL. III.

FROM LOW SUNDAY TO THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

TECHNY, ILLINOIS

FR. PUSTET,
Printer to the Holy See and the S. Congregation of Rites,
Ratisbon, Bavaria, Rome, Libreria Pontificia, Piazza Fontana di Trevi, 81—85.

FR. PUSTET & CO.
NEW YORK AND CINCINNATI.

23/ 17343

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LOW SUNDAY.

EPISTLE. *I. John* 5: 4-10. Dearly beloved: Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth that Christ is the truth. And there are three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three who give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

FAITH.

Most of our Sunday lessons up to this time have been portions or selections from the epistles of St. Paul; but the lesson for this Sunday is taken from the first epistle of St. John. This Apostle wrote not only a gospel and the Apocalypse, but also three epistles, of which the first is addressed to the Christians in the East, the two others to individual persons. In this epistle he exhorts the Christians to be on their guard against the world and all wicked people, and to lead a pious life worthy of their faith: at the same time he warns them against the false teachers who denied the divinity of Christ and disseminated other unchristian doctrines.

To explain to you the contents of our lesson for this day, I will answer the two following questions:

I. What does faith effect;
II. On what is faith founded?

PART I.

The lesson for this day begins with the words: *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith.* All who are regenerated in the holy Sacrament of Baptism, hence all Christians of every age, condition, or sex, have the grace through faith to overcome the enemies of their salvation; that is, the world, the flesh, and the devil. But this faith, which endows us with power to overcome the world and everything that entices us to sin, is the belief in Jesus Christ the Son of God and Redeemer, or in general, the Christian Faith as the Holy Catholic Church teaches it. Therefore St. John writes: *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?*

The question is, how far does faith strengthen us to overcome the world? The answer is, in so far as faith offers us the means of grace, which we need for the overcoming of all temptations and for constancy in the service of God. I will mention only a few of them:

1. *The word of God.* What an effectual means the word of God is for the overcoming of all obstacles to our salvation, for virtue and true holiness of life, St. Paul tells us in the epistle to the Hebrews (4: 12): "The word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also, and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." History convinces us of the power of the word of God. What has rooted up the abominations of Paganism among the nations of the earth and established the Christian religion among them? Was is not the word of God which the Apostles and their successors preached without ceasing? When John Capristan came to Germany in the year 1451, and preached there, whole cities went out to meet him, and his hearers frequently numbered more than a hundred thousand. All were bathed in tears, nothing was heard but sighing and moaning, and the most hardened sinners were converted. By one sermon this saint brought twelve thousand people back to the true faith. The Hussites in Bohemia used to say that they feared that monk more than a strong army. And when the Christian manfully resists temptations to impurity, theft, or injustice, or other sins and vices, does he not do it on account of the word of God, which threatens him with the divine wrath and eternal damnation if he yields to the temptation and sins, but which assures him of the divine pleasure and of eternal

salvation, if he overcomes the temptation and constantly perseveres in virtue? Therefore listen to the word of God with attention as often as it is preached to you, and take to heart and practise what you hear, that you may experience its blessed effects.

2. *The holy sacrifice of the mass.* Through this sacrifice all the graces which Christ has merited for us through his bloody sacrifice on the cross are continually applied to us, as St. Thomas of Aquin says: "In every mass we can find that fruit and benefit which Christ obtained on Good Friday by his death on the cross. Through the holy sacrifice of the mass particularly we receive great graces for the overcoming of all temptations and for perseverance in the service of God." St. Augustine relates that a certain Hesperius, being much tormented by evil spirits, applied to the priests, asking one to come and free him from the evil. One of them went and offered the sacrifice of the mass for him, after which he was free from that trouble (*De Civit. Dei, cap.* 8. Have recourse, then, to this holy sacrifice, not only in your temporal, but also in your spiritual necessities, and whenever you assist at it ask our dear Lord for those graces which you need—namely, grace to overcome all temptations, grace to subdue your inordinate inclinations, and grace to make progress in the path of virtue.

3. *The holy sacraments.* All the holy sacraments impart to us, beside sanctifying grace, special graces, which enable us to fight the good fight and to persevere in justice to the end. Thus we receive in the Sacrament of Confirmation grace to confess our faith with constancy and to live according to its precepts; in the Sacrament of Penance we are strengthened, so that we may not relapse into our old sins, but lead a penitential life; the Sacrament of the Altar weakens our evil inclinations, gives us a desire for virtue, cleanses us from venial sins and preserves us from mortal ones. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction strengthens us in suffering and temptations, especially in the agony of death, and obtains for us the grace to persevere in the love of God and die a happy death. The sacraments, in general, are channels through which all divine aids are conveyed to our souls. Give thanks then to God for the holy sacraments, and always prepare yourselves for their reception with the greatest care, that you may be made partakers of the inestimable graces which they convey.

4. *The prayer of the Church.* Prayer is more effectual when the person who prays is pleasing to God, when a number of persons pray, and when the granting of their petition contributes more to the glory of his divine Name. But who could pray more

acceptably than the Church, the immaculate Spouse of Christ? Who could glory in having so many praying with her as the Church, with whom Christ, her divine Head, prays, and whom Mary, the Queen of heaven and earth, and the innumerable angels and saints assist with their prayers? And why should the prayer of the Church not be granted, since she prays for nothing but what is for the greater honor and glory of God! Be good children of your good Mother, the Church, and assist diligently at her public services; by so doing you may hope to obtain all the graces you need to work out your salvation and be saved.

Such are some of the effects of grace which we owe to our holy faith. Let us now see on what basis our faith rests.

PART II.

St. John shows us that faith in Jesus Christ, which operates so effectually, is not mere imagination, but is based on historical facts.

1. He says: *This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth that Christ is the truth.* St. John here alleges three facts which prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, namely, his coming *by water, by blood*, and by *the testimony of the Holy Ghost.*

(*a.*) It was generally expected in the Old Law that at the time of the Messias a purification from sins would take place by *a baptism of water.* Thus the Prophet Zacharias foretells: "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner."—13: 1. Now, as Christ instituted the holy Sacrament of Baptism for the cleansing of sins, and reception into the Church, he is come *by water,* and consequently is the Messias and the Redeemer of the world foretold by the Prophets.

(*b.*) In the Old Law the belief was also generally spread that the Messias would accomplish the Redemption of mankind by the effusion of his blood, for the Prophets frequently speak of his passion and death. Thus Isaias says of him: "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: And we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed."—53: 4, 5. All the bloody sacrifices moreover of the Old Law were types of Christ, and indicated

that the future Redeemer would offer himself for us on the cross and shed his blood. Christ therefore coming *by blood*, that is, by shedding the last drop of his blood on the cross, has proved that he is the Messias and the Redeemer of the world, promised by God.

(*c.*) Lastly, the *Holy Ghost* testified to the Divinity of Christ and his dignity as the Messias by the wonderful effects of grace which he produced on the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem, and from that time forward in all ages of the Church. How could the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, have performed such miracles of grace in the Apostles and the believers, if Christ had not been truly God?

2. John adduces a further proof of this truth, saying: *And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one.*

(*a.*) God the Father solemnly testified of his Son. At his baptism a voice was heard from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—*Matt.* 3: 7. At his transfiguration on Mount Thabor, his voice came out of a cloud, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And again, in the temple, where Christ said in the presence of a great multitude of people: "Father, glorify thy name. A voice therefore came from heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."—*John* 12: 28.

(*b.*) *Christ testified* to his Divinity and dignity as the Messias by the holiness of his doctrine and life, by his numerous miracles, and especially by his Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and by the propagation and preservation of his Church.

(*c.*) *The Holy Ghost* also testified to the divinity of Christ, especially at his baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and rested on him. —*Matt.* 3: 16. Again, on the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down in the form of cloven tongues of fire, and sat upon the Apostles and disciples, and communicated to them the gift of tongues and other wonderful favors.

3. But St. John mentions not only heavenly but also earthly witnesses who vouch for the fundamental truth of our holy religion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world: *And there are three who give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one.* By *spirit* we here understand the mission of the Holy Ghost in the Church,

his gifts of grace, the miraculous propagation of the Church, and the conversion of the unbelievers and sinners. *Water* indicates the holy Sacrament of Baptism, by which we are cleansed from all stains of sin, spiritually regenerated and sanctified. The *blood* signifies the bloody sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross, by which we have been reconciled with God. The spirit, the water and the blood, in the above mentioned sense, evidently testify to the Divinity of Christ, because they are effects which necessarily presuppose his divine power. If Christ were not almighty, and consequently truly God, he could not have sent the Holy Ghost with his wonderful operations of grace; his baptism and death on the cross would not have the power of blotting out sin and reconciling us with God.

4. St. John adds: *If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son.* If we believe what two or three witnesses affirm, who, being men, can err and deceive, how much more must we believe the testimony of God, who is the eternal, infallible truth?

PERORATION.

Hold fast to your faith in Jesus Christ and to everything which he, through his Church, proposes to your belief, and do not allow yourselves to waver or to be duped by infidels and free-thinkers. Watch over your children, and do not permit them to keep company, much less to enter into matrimonial alliances, with people who have little or no religion, much less with non-Catholics, lest they suffer shipwreck of their faith and lose their souls. The holy Catholic Faith is a most precious treasure; preserve it with the greatest care; without it you can not please God, nor be saved. And not only believe firmly, but live in accordance with your faith; show the purity of your faith by the purity of your morals, manifest a heavenly life in an earthly habitation, walk in the way of God's commandments, for only "faith that worketh by charity" (*Gal.* 5: 6) leads to salvation. Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

Gospel. *John* 20: 19-31. At that time: When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them and he said to them; Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not incredulous, but believing. Thomas answered and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

TWO APPARITIONS OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

What the gospel for this day relates occured on Easter Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of our Lord, and on the eighth day after, that is, on this Sunday. After the crucifixion of their divine Master, the Apostles and disciples remained together, occupying an upper room,—called in the East, a *Cœnaculum*—where they had taken the Last Supper. They kept the doors closed, for they feared that the High Council would order their arrest,

throw them into prison, or cause them to be executed. It was a sad time from Good Friday till Sunday for the followers of our Lord. But that which he foretold came to pass: "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep; but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—*John* 16: 20. Easter day was very nearly over; it was evening, when the risen Christ suddenly appears to his astonished disciples, speaks with them and convinces them of his Resurrection. But Thomas, one of the Apostles, was not present when Christ appeared. Eight days after he appears again to them and heals Thomas of his incredulity. These two apparitions form the contents of our gospel. Let us consider them a little more closely.

I. The apparition of Christ in the absence of Thomas;
II. The apparition of Christ in the presence of Thomas.

PART I.

1. The first words spoken by Christ when the appeared to his Apostles were: *Peace be to you.* And he repeated this greeting the second and third time, eight days after. Having accomplished the work of our redemption, Christ could say in truth: "Peace be to you," for the partition which sin had raised between God and man was removed, we are reconciled to God, and have peace. Hence the Apostle says: "Let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access through faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God."—*Rom.* 5: 1, 2. If you have complied with your Easter duty, and worthily received the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, I can also say to you to-day, in the name of Jesus: *Peace be to you,* for you are so happy as to possess peace. Preserve this inestimable treasure with the greatest solicitude. Guard against sin, for it is sin alone that can deprive you of peace. Fight courageously against all temptations, and curb your inordinate inclinations and passions, and you will have peace with God, with yourselves and your neighbor, and eternal rest in heaven will be your reward.

2. Our Saviour showed *them his hands and his side;* he showed them the marks of the wounds in his hands and his side, to convince them that he was truly risen, and had assumed the self-same body that was his before his death. The disciples, seeing that it was truly Jesus who was in their midst, were exceedingly glad. If there are Christians who find no pleasure or joy in conversing with Jesus, in meditation and prayer, in visiting and adoring him in the tabernacle, in receiving him in holy communion,

in speaking of him, or hearing others speak of him, it is a sure sign that they have little or no love for him.

3. Christ said to his disciples: *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.* With these words he makes his apostles ambassadors, his representatives, and commits to them the same errand as that on which he was sent by his heavenly Father, which is no other than the salvation of mankind. As he valued the salvation of man so highly as to shed his blood, so they ought not to fear labor, persecutions, sufferings, or death. The Apostles faithfully complied with their vocation, sealing their labors with their blood. How is it with you? Are you solicitous for the salvation of those over whom God placed you? Do you do what you can to save the souls of your fellow-men? Are you ready to suffer tribulations and persecutions? In order to keep alive your zeal for souls, and to strengthen it, consider the value of a soul and the price at which Jesus purchased it; and you, parents, take to heart the words of the Apostle: If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8.

4. *When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* The breathing signifies the communication of the Holy Ghost, who is the author of the spiritual life or of sanctifying grace. As the breath of God gave the natural life to Adam, so the supernatural life, which consists in purification and sanctification is communicated to us through the Holy Ghost. How unfortunate would you be if you should lose this supernatural life, this sanctifying grace! Avoid sin, for it is sin that destroys the supernatural life and delivers the soul to death. Recognize in every salutary thought, in every interior illumination, in every impulse to virtue, the breath of the Holy Ghost, and employ it for the salvation of your soul. Shut your heart against the suggestions of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they may not bring upon you ruin and perdition.

5. *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.* How affectionately and mercifully does God deal with us! He is grievously offended by us, and he gives men the power to reconcile us to him. And on what easy conditions does he grant us pardon! We need only confess our sins with a contrite heart to a priest, and they are forgiven. How fortunate would a criminal consider himself if he could obtain from a human tribunal of justice the remission of his crimes and punishments on such easy conditions! Oh! let us give thanks to Christ for having furnished us in the Sacrament of Penance with so easy a means for our purification and

justification. Examine your previous confessions, and if you discover any faults in them, delay not to rectify them. Make every confession as if it were the last of your life.

6. The gospel says that Thomas was not present when Christ appeared. He had separated himself from the society of the disciples, either because he was tired of it, or because he was engaged in something else more dear to his heart. For this reason he was deprived of a great favor, the grace of seeing the risen Saviour as the other Apostles did. Guard against this fault of St. Thomas. Tarry with pleasure in the society of good, pious Christians, for their example will edify you, and awaken and strengthen Christian fervor in your heart. Avoid all intimate intercourse with frivolous and irreligious people, that you may not be seduced by them. Do not stay away from the public worship of the Church and her ordinary devotions, for thereby you would deprive yourselves of many graces and give a bad example.

7. When Thomas returned to the disciples they assured him that they had seen the Lord, and told him all that had occurred in his absence; but he would not believe them, and said: *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.* Thomas indeed was wrong; he should have believed his fellow-disciples, because, on the one hand, their veracity was known to him, and on the other, they unanimously and emphatically assured him that they had seen Christ, had spoken and eaten with him, and that consequently no deception was possible. God, however, permitted the incredulity of his disciple for our benefit, as St. Gregory the Great says: "Do you suppose that it happened by accident that this chosen disciple was not present then, but afterwards coming, heard, and hearing, doubted, and doubting, touched, and touching, believed? This occurred, not by chance, but by a wise dispensation of divine Providence; for God ordained that this doubting disciple, by touching the wounds of the body of his Master, should heal in us the wounds of doubt; for the incredulity of Thomas has profited us more than the faith of the believing disciples since he was constrained to believe by the evidence of his senses, and thus we are strengthened by the removal of all doubts."

PART II.

After eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you.

(*a.*) Thomas persevered for eight days in his incredulity, and would have continued longer, had not our Lord come to his

succor. Thus we can fall and remain in sin, but we cannot rise unless God assist us by his grace. How often have we experienced this? Oh, let us acknowledge and praise the mercy and goodnes of God, which, after our fall, came to our rescue and raised us up! Christ sought one Apostle, but appeared to them all, that he who had sinned in the presence of all should amend in the presence of all, and that he who had grieved all by his unbelief should rejoice all by his belief. In like manner you must give a good example to those whom you have scandalized and endeavor, by a fervent practice of the opposite virtues, to repair the evil you have done.

(*b.*) *Jesus cometh, the doors being shut.* Thomas had greatly erred by his incredulity; he had, therefore, to be reminded of his fault and reproved. Christ rebukes him for his fault, not publicly, but privately, the doors being shut, in order not to injure the good name of his disciple. God acts in like manner when we sin. He reprimands us, not publicly, but secretly in our conscience, through which he upbraids us for our faults and exhorts us to amend our life. Oh, that, like Thomas, we ever hearkened to these gentle reproaches, repented of our faults, and amended them! Let us imitate the example of Jesus, and spare as much as possible the honor and good name of the person whom we are obliged to reprove. Let us do it in secret, unless particular circumstances require an exception.

(*c.*) *Jesus stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you.* By these words he would indicate that his disciples would have peace if he was in the midst, but that otherwise they would have no peace. Consider these important words. If Christ is not in your heart, and is not the centre of all your wishes and endeavors, you will have no true peace. Whenever your self-love is the centre of your desires, you lose the peace of your soul, and receive in exchange for it disquietude and troubles. See to it, therefore, that you have Christ always within you; make him the end of all your aspirations, words and actions, and frequently say: "Jesus all for thy love."

2. Christ, turning to Thomas, said: *Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but believing.*

(*a.*) Why does he turn to Thomas only? To indicate that he came for his sake alone. Oh, how good is God! Be not indifferent when the salvation of a soul is in peril; do all you can to save it, especially when that soul is entrusted to your charge. How do you conduct yourselves when you meet those who have offended

you? Do you speak to them? Do you give them signs of reconciliation? Consider that Christians who do not forgive those who have offended them are destitute of the mark of a true disciple of Christ.

(*b.*) Our Lord requires Thomas to touch his wounds, and to be no longer incredulous, but believing. How pathetic is this conduct of Christ! I know, he means to say, what you have said in my absence, and what you have demanded. Come, see and touch my wounds, and believe. Thus Christ knows how to rebuke sweetly and affectionately, to wound and to heal. With such affection you must also treat your erring brethren, in order to bring them to the knowledge of their faults and the amendment of their life. Beware of correcting others in the heat of passion, that you may not yourselves, whilst endeavoring to correct them, offend God and commit sin.

3. *Thomas answered and said to him: My Lord and my God.* By these words Thomas expresses what he feels in his heart. Sorrow and love do not permit him to say more. Conscious of his fault, he feels deep shame and contrition; remembering the love of Christ, and knowing that he has deserved his displeasure, his heart is inflamed with the most ardent love. This compunction and love must also be in our hearts, whenever we think of our sins and the mercy of God. Thomas calls him his Lord, and thereby testifies that he fears him; he calls him his God, and thereby indicates that he loves him. We acknowledge Christ as our Lord and God, but if he is our Lord, why do we not fear to offend him, and if he is our God, why do we not love him above all things?

4. Then Christ said to Thomas: *Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.* By these words Christ rebukes Thomas, and gives him to understand that his faith does not deserve to be praised because he made it depend on the evidence of his senses, seeing and touching. Thomas should have believed the Resurrection of Christ upon the word of his fellow Apostles, and he deserved a rebuke, because he would not believe until he had seen and touched the wounds of the Lord. Christ calls those blessed who do not see and yet believe. We are of this class, for we have not seen the risen Saviour, and yet we believe in him and all those things which he has revealed, and by his Church proposes to our belief. And this faith, which is based upon the authority of the Church, is more certain than if it were based upon seeing and hearing, for our senses may deceive us, but the Church cannot, because she is the pillar and the ground of truth. Let

us give thanks to God for the privilege of being members of the Catholic Church and subject ourselves with cheerful obedience to her doctrine and precepts.

PERORATION.

At the conclusion of this day's gospel, St. John remarks that Christ did many other signs in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in St. John's gospel, but that which he has written is sufficient for our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God. Indeed, what St. John wrote concerning the life and actions of our divine Saviour, is more than sufficient to establish our faith in him and his divine doctrine on a solid basis against all temptations to unbelief. Let us endeavor always to live according to our belief, that the words of Christ may be fulfilled in us: *Amen, Amen, I say to you: He that believeth in me hath everlasting life.—John* 6: 57. Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

FAITH.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.— John 20: 29.

Thomas did wrong in refusing so obstinately to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus, when not only Mary Magdalen and the other women who had visited the grave, but also Peter, the other Apostles, and the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus, unanimously assured him that our Lord had appeared to them, had spoken with them, had showed them marks of his wounds, and in their presence had eaten with them. But God permitted this unbelief for our good; his lack of faith should strengthen our faith and render it immovable, that we may be of the number of those of whom Christ says: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." I shall speak to-day on faith, and explain to you—

I. What Faith is;
II. What Faith profits.

PART I.

Faith is a virtue infused by God into our souls, by which we believe without doubting all that God has revealed and that his Church proposes to us to be believed.

1. *Faith is a virtue.* Faith is called a virtue, because it is not a mere transient emotion, but a firm conviction, a permanent adherence to Christian truths. A Christian who has the virtue of faith is thoroughly penetrated by its doctrines and maxims, and all his words and actions give evidence of his faith. If he hears irreligious expressions, he detests them with his whole soul, and defends truth with all his strength. If he is tempted to sin, he at once calls to mind what faith says about it, and rejects the temptation with constancy. If an opportunity of doing a good act presents itself, faith is to him a powerful incentive to do it. He judges everything in the light of faith; what the worldling values and loves he despises, and what that one despises is to him an object of desire. Faith is his all, and for this reason he is ready, like the martyrs, to sacrifice his substance and life for it. Examine yourselves and see whether you have this virtue of faith.

2. *Faith is a virtue infused by God into our souls.* We cannot of ourselves, by study and inquiry, acquire faith, but only through the grace of God. God must send us not only teachers to instruct us in the truths of faith, but he must also enlighten our understanding, and work upon our will, that we may acknowledge these truths and accept them. Faith is a gift of God. Therefore Jesus Christ says that no one can come to him, that is, believe in him, except the Father draw him by his grace.—*John* 6: 44. And when Peter professed his belief in him as the Son of God, Christ says: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 16: 17. Hence the Council of Orania declares: "If any one says that the growth, as well as the beginning of faith, is not an effect of the grace of God, but that this faculty is formed in our heart in a natural way, he contradicts the apostolic doctrine of faith." Thank God that he has given you, without any merit of yours, the holy Catholic faith, and employ it for your salvation.

3. *We must believe without doubting all that God has revealed and that his Church proposes to us to be believed.*

(*a.*) God himself is our teacher, and reveals to us what we must believe and do in order to be saved. He spoke in an audible manner with our first parents, with the patriarchs Noe, Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob; afterwards with Moses and the prophets. Finally, he sent his only-begotten Son and through him instructed the people in the doctrines of the Christian religion. Therefore the Apostle says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son."—*Heb.* 1: 1, 2.

(*b.*) That we must believe without doubting all that God has revealed on divers occasions, is evident. God is the eternal, infallible truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."—*Matt.* 24: 35. As soon as we know that a doctrine is revealed by God, we are most strictly bound to hold it to be true. To hold such a doctrine not to be true, or to doubt it, would be to reject or doubt the veracity of God, to blaspheme God.

(*c.*) But how do we know that God has revealed a certain doctrine? We know this *through the Catholic Church.* We should be truly unfortunate if on the one hand we incurred the obligation of believing all that God has revealed, but on the other hand did not know whether a particular doctrine was revealed by God. This uncertainty would bring us to a doubtful faith, and divine faith can never be doubtful; it must be certain. Now Christ has appointed the Apostles and their successors, the Pope and the bishops of the Catholic Church, as his representatives, and has given them the commission to preach his doctrine to all nations to the end of time.—*Matt.* 28: 19. To enable them to fulfil this commission and always to preach pure and unadulterated doctrine, he promised and sent them the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all truth and abide with them until the consummation of the world.—*John* 14: 16-26. Therefore if we believe the Church, we believe God, for the Church proposes nothing to our belief but what God has revealed, she makes no new articles of faith, but preserves and delivers only those which have been intrusted to her by Christ. She is the mouth through which God speaks to us, and she can say with Christ: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."—*John* 7: 16. He therefore who does not believe and accept as truth what the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, proposes to our belief, is an adversary of Christ, and causes his own damnation. Consider this well, and always pray with mouth and heart: "O my God, I firmly believe all the sacred truths which thy holy Catholic Church believes and teaches, because thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived."

PART II.

Faith profits us greatly, for it causes us—

1. *To please God.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. If it is impossible without faith to please God, it follows that those who possess faith, provided it has the right qualities, please God. St. Paul proves this by examples from the Old Law. He speaks of Abel, Enoch, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and other just men, and shows that it was their faith that pleased God.—*Heb.* 11. The great promises which Christ attaches to faith still more clearly prove how much faith pleases God. Thus he makes the gift of working miracles depend on faith, and promises to those who have faith that they shall work the greatest miracles. "If you have *faith* as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you."—*Matt.* 17: 19. Again, he promises to those who have faith the granting of all their petitions. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."—*Matt.* 21: 22. He also assures them of their filial relationship with God, of a glorious resurrection and eternal salvation. "As many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God, them that believe in his name."—*John* 1: 12. "I am the resurrection and the life; *he that believeth in me,* although he be dead, *shall live;* and every one that liveth and *believeth in me,* shall *not die for ever.*"—*John* 11: 25, 26. Who could doubt that faith is a virtue very pleasing to God, since such glorious promises are made to those who believe?

2. *To lead a Christian life.* The just man liveth by faith—*Rom.* 1: 17. As the farmer lives by his labor in the field, the business man by his business, the mechanic by his trade, that is, draws his sustenance therefrom, so the Christian derives his supernatural life and spiritual nourishment from faith.

(*a.*) It is faith that *keeps us from evil,* for it tells us what sin is and what dreadful consequences it entails. It cries out to us: If you commit mortal sin, you lose the grace of God, you cease to be his child, lose your right to heaven, and make yourselves guilty of eternal damnation. Again, faith tells us that even the least fault is an evil with which no temporal evil can be compared, because it offends God, the supreme Good, weakens grace, and merits a severe chastisement in purgatory. Why should we not be afraid of sin and avoid it with the greatest care, considering seriously its real character as shown to us by faith? The reason why so many people commit the greatest sins without

fear and live impenitently is this, that they have either no faith at all, or a false one, or else never consider the truths of faith.

(*b.*) It is faith that *urges us on to virtue,* for it teaches us that true justice does not consist merely in avoiding evil, but also in the practice of virtue, and that one cannot be saved without good works. "Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—*Matt.* 3: 18. *The slothful servant in the Gospel. The five foolish virgins, who had faith, but no good works.* Faith teaches us that every good action, even the most insignificant, if done for God's sake, will be rewarded in heaven. "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Matt.* 10: 42.

(*c.*) Lastly, it is faith that gives us courage and strength *patiently to bear all the sufferings of this life.* He who considers the sufferings and tribulations of life in the light of faith regards them not as evils, but rather as blessings which are of the greatest advantage to him, provided he makes good use of them. He knows that they free him from self-love and inordinate attachment to the world, and give him an opportunity of acquiring merit for heaven. He consoles himself with the words of the Apostle: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4: 17. Whilst unbelievers and those whose faith is weak become discouraged and despair when severe trials come upon them, and sometimes go so far as to lay violent hands on their own life, Christians strong in faith carry their cross with patience, be it ever so heavy, mindful of the words of Jesus: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."—*Luke* 9: 23.

3. *To die happy.*

(*a.*) The proverb says: As a man lives, so shall he die. Since our faith urges us to avoid evil and to do good. and in all sufferings to preserve patience, in other words, to lead a Christian life, it is evident that, if we are well grounded in faith, we can hope with confidence to die a good death. Hence the saints and all those Christians who served God zealously have looked forward with consolation to the hour of their dissolution, for they remembered the words, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them.*—*Apoc.* 14: 13.

(*b.*) The believing Christian has his destiny always before his eyes, he frequently thinks of death, which may come any moment, he thinks of the judgment which is to decide his fate for all eternity, and these thoughts urge him to walk in the fear of God, and to keep his conscience in order, so that when God calls him from this world he may not find him unprepared.

(*c.*) Finally, he who is penetrated by a lively faith will scrupulously employ the means necessary for a good death. He will pray, because he knows that without prayer he cannot overcome temptations, nor persevere in virtue, he will attentively listen to the word of God, and read, whenever he has time, spiritual books, in order to instruct himself more and more in the truths of salvation and to obtain strength and fervor in the practice of virtue; he will frequently receive the holy sacraments, in order to keep his conscience free from sin and to make progress towards perfection. By the diligent use of these and other means of salvation he will be enabled to persevere in the state of grace to the end and die a good and happy death.

PERORATION.

Since you know *what faith* is, and *what it profits you*, give thanks to God daily that he infused it into your souls at your baptism, and stand firmly by it to your last breath. In our days the assailants of our faith are numerous; do not permit yourselves to be led into error by them, do not listen to their discourses, and do not read their papers and books.

Let faith be dearer to you than anything else. In order to preserve the inestimable treasure of faith, follow the guidance of the Catholic Church, which, enlightened and governed by the Holy Ghost, possesses the gift of infallibility and always tells you with certainty what is truth and what is error. Make your faith the rule of your life, do what it commands, and avoid what it forbids, that you may experience its blessings in life and death. Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE RENEWAL OF THE PROMISES OF BAPTISM.

Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.—I. John 5: 4.

In the early days of Christianity the Sacrament of Baptism was solemnly administered on Holy Saturday; the newly-baptized wore, in token of their baptismal innocence, white garments, which they solemnly took off to-day, "yet so," as St. Augustine says, "that the whiteness, which was laid aside in the garment, was retained in the soul." This Sunday therefore is named White Sunday, *Dominica in albis*, that is, Sunday in white garments.

On this day, or on some other day in Easter week, it was formerly a general custom for those who had received baptism a year before to assemble in the church, in order to solemnize the anniversary of their spiritual regeneration. The priest, in the presence of their sponsors, renewed with them the promises of baptism, and exhorted them with earnest and affectionate words to keep the covenant entered into with God.

This is also a very appropriate day for you to renew your baptismal vows; because, having confessed, and receive holy communion, you have recovered your baptismal innocence. What then is more becoming for you than renew your vows to to God, promising him to fulfil conscientiously the obligations which you assumed at your baptism? Therefore I shall speak to you to-day about the renewal of the *covenant of baptism*, which consists in this, that we—

I. Renounce Satan;
II. And vow to God.

Part I.

The covenant of baptism principally consists *in renouncing Satan.* Therefore the priest puts to the person to be baptized the question: N., Do you renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his pomps? Then the person to be baptized answers (or the godfather, or the godmother, or both, in the person's name), "I do renounce him," "I do renounce them."

1. *I do renounce Satan.* We must therefore no longer have communion with the devil, nor adhere to nor serve him, for to renounce Satan is nothing else than to hate and detest him, and to have nothing to do with him. The devil is the worst enemy of Jesus, and seeks to destroy his kingdom; how can we make common cause with him? He is also our worst enemy, for "as a roaring lion, he goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.—*I. Pet.* 5: 8. How can we fight under his banner?

Neither must we have any communion with his confederates. Such a confederate is the world, against which St. John warns us. *I. John* 2: 15: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him." The world always coöperates with the devil. It urges us to indulge our evil desires and the lusts of the flesh, it defends and excuses the most horrid vices, it is always at war with Christianity, and its exertions to keep man from the performance of his duties and the practice of the Christian virtues are indefatigable, inducing him not to live for heaven, but for the world. Our *self-love* is also in compact with the devil. He that is governed by it puts God aside and endeavors only to gratify his ambition, cares only for temporal things, and forgets eternity; he neglects the duties of religion in various ways, transgresses God's commandments and burdens his conscience with many sins. Thus the world and self-love are the confederates of the devil, for they pursue the same end that he pursues, the ruin of souls. To renounce the devil, therefore, means, not only to renounce him, but also to renounce the world and self-love. Ask yourselves not only: Have I always rejected the suggestions of the devil and never given ear to his temptations to pride, impurity, envy, etc? but also: Have I acted according to the maxims of the world and disregarded God, his holy law and the voice of my conscience? Have I not preferred my own honor and will to the honor and will of God, cared more for temporal than for eternal goods, and in my dealing with others have I not violated the duties of justice and charity? If, upon an attentive consideration of these and similar questions, you find yourself guilty, you have broken your baptismal vow, and you ought to humble yourselves before God and promise him to amend your life.

2. *And all his works.* By the works of the devil we understand all sins. Sin is properly the work of the devil, for through him sin came into the world, and it is his continual endeavor to lead man into it and to plunge him into perdition. These works of the devil the Apostle mentions in detail in his Epistle to the Galatians, 5: 19-21. We have solemnly renounced these works, and have made the promise never more "to let sin reign in our

mortal bodies, so as to obey the lusts thereof."—*Rom.* 6: 12. All pious Christians have ever been solicitous to keep this baptismal vow and not to offend God by mortal sin. A certain Indian in Canada who had received baptism and after it holy communion, came again a year afterwards to the missionary and asked for holy communion. The missionary declared himself ready to do so, but told him to confess the mortal sins which he had committed after his baptism. The poor Indian began to cry, and said: "Father, you ask me to confess my mortal sins! Can any one offend God by mortal sin after being baptized?" This poor child of the forest had lived after his baptism so piously that he had not even committed a wilful, deliberate venial sin, much less a mortal one. Like this Indian, you at your baptism renounced the devil; have you kept your promise as conscientiously as he did? Ah, how much reason will you have to acknowledge that "from the days of your childhood up to his hour you have often and grievously sinned in thought, word and deed, and by the omission of good works." Oh, bewail your infidelity, humbly ask pardon of God, and promise him from henceforth to renounce for ever the works of the devil. Never again commit mortal sin. Remember frequently, especially in the hour of temptation, the words of the Indian convert: "Can any one offend God by mortal sin after being baptized?"

3. *And all his pomps.* Pride is especially mentioned among the works of the devil, because he fell through pride. It is also the vice to which the devil especially tempts man. Thus he deceived our first parents, telling them that they should be as gods, if they would eat the forbidden fruit.—*Gen.* 3: 5. Again, it is pride that is absolutely incompatible with Christianity, as Christ teaches us by word and example. "Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 18: 3. Lastly, pride leads to the greatest sins, and strips all good works of merit for heaven. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, that you may be seen by them. Otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father, who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 6: 1. How is it with you? Has your heart never been captivated by pride? To be able to answer this question, you need only represent to yourselves the principal marks of pride. It is pride that impels you to seek the praise and applause of men, and it is pride that makes you rejoice when you hear yourself praised by others. If you do good works merely in order to be praised by your fellowmen; if you reveal without necessity your good qualities and actions and boast of them; if, through vanity, you dress in accordance with the latest approved style and fashions, and adorn yourself to please men; if you desire to appear more than you

really are, if you prefer yourself before others, if you pretend to know and understand everything better than others, or if you are sad and angry when others are preferred before you, it is pride by which you are actuated, that is the beam in your eye. If, after a careful examination you find these and similar marks of pride in yourself, you must acknowledge that you have not kept your baptismal vow, and you must endeavor to become truly humble.

This is the first thing that is required for the renewal of the covenant of baptism: you must *renounce the devil* and all his works and pomps: the other is you *must make a vow to God.*

PART II.

Immediately before baptism the priest puts the following questions to the person to be baptized: *Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born into this world, and who suffered for us? Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?* And the answer to each of these questions is: *I do believe.* Faith is absolutely necessary for salvation; without it baptism would avail us nothing. "He that *believeth,* and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that *believeth not,* shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. Hence before the priest baptized us, we were obliged to promise faith. But the faith to which we have obliged ourselves in baptism must be—

1. *Universal.* We must believe not only a part, but all that God has revealed to us, and proposes to our belief by the Catholic Church. We have vowed this belief at our baptism. The priest who baptized us, asked us not only whether we believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but also whether we believed in the holy Catholic Church. If we believe in the holy Catholic Church, we must believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to our belief; our faith must be universal. It matters not whether we comprehend the truths which the Catholic Church proposes to our belief or not, whether they are a stumbling-block to the unbeliever or not. It is enough for us to know that the Church proposes this or that truth to our belief. And the reason is, because to believe all that the Catholic Church believes and teaches means nothing else than to hold that the Catholic Church is the Church established by Christ and governed by the Holy Ghost, and consequently the pillar and ground of truth, the only true, the only saving Church, claiming and possessing the mark of infallibility. He who would disbe-

lieve or doubt a single article of faith proposed by the Church to our belief, for instance, that the Pope, when speaking *excathedra*, (that is, when "officially," in the discharge of his duties as Chief Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority he defines a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church) by the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, is infallible—or who would disbelieve or doubt that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin, or that Matrimony is a Sacrament,—the faith of such a person would not be universal, nor could he be saved.

Reflect how matters stand with your faith. Perhaps there may be some among you who, infected with the unbelief and scepticism of our time or deluded by their passions, have more or less sinned against faith. They have, perhaps, applauded the lectures and writings of the assailants and enemies of the Church and adopted maxims which are contrary to the Catholic doctrine: for instance, that it matters little whether one eats meat on Friday or not; that impurity is only a human weakness; that certain acts of injustice in business are permissible; that in order not to draw the ridicule of the world upon one's self one must conform to the spirit of the times, and may disregard the ordinances of the Church. If you have sanctioned such maxims, or acted according to them, you have sinned against your baptismal vow, and you must change your mode of thinking, and unconditionally believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, if you wish to be saved.

2. *Firm.* Bad example, scandal, flattery, threats, tribulation, persecution, martyrdom, death, must not make us waver in our faith. This firmness of faith is so much the more necessary in our days, as there are numberless men who, not content with being unbelievers themselves, unceasingly labor by word of mouth and by their writings to open the way to universal unbelief. If you permit yourselves to be led astray by unbelievers, you grievously sin against your baptismal vows, and run the risk of being rejected for ever as perjurers and traitors. Guard against suffering shipwreck of faith. Have no intercourse with unbelievers and free-thinkers, neither keep nor read papers hostile to the Church, that you may not support a bad cause and expose yourselves and your own to the danger of losing all religious feeling and sentiment, and even faith. Never be ashamed of your Catholic faith, always let it be seen that you are Catholics, and confess courageously that you consider it the greatest honor to be children of the Catholic Church. Let this be your motto: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Gal.* 6: 14.

3. *Lively.* Our faith must manifest itself by a pious life. We must live up to it; we must avoid evil and do good in the manner prescribed by our faith. Faith alone will save no man. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of the Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 7: 21. And if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2. When we vowed faith at our baptism it was not a dead, but a living faith, which manifests itself by a faithful, scrupulous performance of the divine law. The priest indicated this, for when to his question, *What dost thou ask of the Church of God?* we answered, *Faith,* he said, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* To believe what the Church teaches, to do what she commands, carefully to avoid sin, and to lead a pious life, this is the faith to which we bound ourselves at our baptism and which is necessary for our salvation. How many Christians are destitute of this lively faith! They believe as Catholics, but do not live according to their Catholic faith. They believe in a judgment and a hell, nevertheless give themselves up to dissipation and vice, as if there were no judgment and no hell. They believe that avarice, injustice, impurity, drunkenness, hatred, and enmity exclude from the kingdom of heaven, yet they are addicted to these vices, as if they had no reason to fear on account of them. They believe that those who do not shun the proximate occasion of sin cannot make a valid confession, but they absolutely have not the will to shun those persons, places, associations, and entertainments that are to them the cause of many and grievous sins. They believe that nothing is more perilous than to defer penance and conversion from day to day, yet they live for years in the state of sin, and let one opportunity of grace after another pass by without being reconciled with God by true repentance. Ah, such a faith leads not to heaven, but to hell. "Try your own selves if you be in the faith" (*II. Cor.* 13: 5); and labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your vocation and election.

PERORATION.

Consider what St. Ephrem says: "Those who have not been faithful in the observance of the vows and promises which they made in baptism, will hear out of the mouth of Jesus at the particular and at the general judgment, those terrible words of the Gospel: 'Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant.' (*Luke* 19: 22); remembering the promises which thou made so solemnly, but violated so shamefully I judge and condemn thee.'" If your conscience tells you that you have broken the

covenant of your baptism, repent of the breach of your vows, humbly ask pardon of God, and promise him a thorough and permanent conversion. Renew the covenant of your baptism, not only to-day, but frequently in the year, especially on the days you go to holy communion, and in the time of great temptation, and beg of God the grace that you may faithfully keep it to the last breath of your life. Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE MARKS OF THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST ARE MEMENTOS OF OUR PEACE.

Jesus said to his disciples: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.—*John* 20: 19, 20.

The risen Saviour, appearing to his disciples, says to them, *Peace be to you.* Why are his first words a greeting of peace? For no other reason than because peace is of all things the most desirable. He that has peace is content, and he that is content is happy, whatever his condition may be. Christ could wish his disciples nothing better than peace. But why did he show them the marks of his wounds, after greeting them? He wished thereby to intimate that his salutation and the marks of his wounds stand in the closest connection, and that he could not have said: *Peace be to you,* if he could not have shown them the marks of his wounds. The peace which we enjoy is a fruit of the passion and death of Christ. Hence the marks of his sacred wounds are, as I will show you to-day, mementos of our peace—

I. With God;
II. With ourselves;
III. With our neighbor.

PART I.

As the rainbow in the heavens (*Gen.* 9: 15), so the marks of the sacred wounds of Christ are mementos of our peace with God, with this difference, however, that they not only indicate, but procure this peace.

1. Without a Redeemer we should still languish in the slavery of sin and have no peace with God. This will be manifest to us if we consider what sin is.

(*a.*) Sin is a *disobedience to God*, for he who sins acts contrary to the will of God, and therefore is disobedient to him. Nay, sin is not only a disobedience, but also a rebellion against God, for the sinner throws off his allegiance to God and will no longer acknowledge God for his lord, will no longer serve him, but acts independently of him. (The rebellious angels. Our first parents.)

(*b.*) Sin is a *disregard*, a *contempt of God*, for the sinner prefers a mean, contemptible thing to God, as the Jews preferred Barabbas to Christ.

(*c.*) Sin is *the blackest ingratitude towards God*, for he who sins returns to God, for all his benefits, nothing but ingratitude, rebellion, and contempt. From this it is evident that persons can have no peace with God so long as they are in the state of sin. "There is no peace to the wicked."—*Is.* 48 : 22. What a terrible state to have lost peace with God! God is displeased with sinners, they live in his displeasure, die in their sins, and perish eternally. And such would be the lot of all of us, because we came into this world contaminated with original sin, and moreover have many personal sins upon our conscience. Had we no Redeemer, it would be better for us never to have been born, for it would, without doubt, be far better not to exist, than to be for ever miserable.

2. But God, who wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live, has sent us his only-begotten Son for our Redemption. And how was he, to accomplish our Redemption? After suffering unutterable tortures, he was to die on the cross, and shed the last drop of his blood; only in such a way could peace be restored between God and man. This decree of his heavenly Father has really been fulfilled by Christ; he offered himself on the cross, and made peace between heaven and earth. Through Jesus Christ all things are reconciled unto God, "making peace through the blood of his cross."—*Col.* 1 : 20. We are now children of God, and can look up to him with confidence, and say: "Abba! Father."

What do the sacred wounds of Jesus tell us? They tell us that we are redeemed, that God is no more angry with us, that we have peace with him. What a grace! We may now live contentedly and die a peaceful death, because we have peace with God. Let us be careful to preserve this peace, especially as we have

received at this Easter time the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, thereby making our peace with God.

Part II.

1. The sacred wounds are also memorials of *peace with ourselves*. This peace consists in a good conscience. If we had not Jesus with his five sacred wounds, there would be no man upon the whole earth who would have a good conscience and enjoy peace. How could we be calm and contented, if our conscience always cried out to us: Thou art a sinner—an enemy of God, thou hast no hope of ever being freed from thy sins, for there is no Redeemer for thee; thou wilt live and die in sin and perish eternally. If sinners, who, be their sins ever so great and numerous, may yet hope for pardon and grace, often experience the most painful remorse of conscience, and are tormented by fear and anguish, how frightful would our lot be if all hope of the forgiveness of our sins were cut off! In fact, our life upon earth would be a true life of hell, a perpetual despair. And that would really be our lot upon earth, for without a Redeemer there would be no forgiveness of sin and no reconciliation with God.

2. But Jesus is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world (*John* 1: 29), in whom we have Redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace (*Ephes.* 1: 1); by his bruises we are healed. (*Isaias* 53: 5.) The sacred wounds of Jesus remind us of our Redemption, of our purification and sanctification. Looking at them, we can say with the Psalmist: "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption."—*Ps.* 129: 7. Our sins being forgiven, we are tranquil, we have peace with ourselves, that peace which surpasses all understanding, and which the world, with all its goods, cannot give. Consider the saints, what sweet comfort did they not find in the thought: We are children of God, and heirs of heaven. Even sufferings and tribulations were not able to disturb the peace of their soul. Peter lies in prison, and is to be executed on the following day; he sleeps during the night so soundly and calmly that an angel was obliged to strike him on the side in order to wake him.—*Acts.* 2: 7. St. Paul says of himself: "I am filled with comfort. I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation."—*II. Cor.* 7: 4. How comforted were the saints in death! St. Jerome called death his dearest brother, and said to his friends who visited him on his dying-bed: "My friends, do you bring me the news that I must die? May God reward you for the happy tidings! Participate in my joy, be witnesses of my happiness. Behold the precious moment that will make me free

for ever. O blessed hour of death, sweet, peaceful sleep, come and close my eyes!"

We also can live and die at peace with ourselves, for Christ died for us, his sacred wounds being memorials of the peace with our own selves. Oh, let us frequently contemplate with a grateful heart the sacred wounds of Jesus, and vow to him perpetual love and allegiance, that we may preserve the precious treasure, peace with ourselves, in life and death.

PART III.

1. The sacred wounds of our Lord are also memorials of *peace with our neighbor*. Sin is the enemy of peace: where it dominates, there the passions have full sway, and it is the unruly passions that disturb peace on every occasion. How often does the ambitious man quarrel with his fellow-men! To what dissensions and injustices does not avarice give rise! What shall I say of impurity? How often is it not the cause of aversion, hatred, fights, duels, wounds, and homicides! And what will not a man do in whose heart the poison of envy dwells? Does he not sin in thought, word, and deed against fraternal charity? The same may be said of all the other passions: if they are not controlled, they break all the bonds of peace and everywhere cause discord and enmity.

The history of all times proves this. Sin had scarcely entered into the world when peace was disturbed, and dissension became the more prevalent the more sin increased. Nations were hostile to one another, war succeeded war, and human blood flowed in torrents. Even in families, discord, dissension, and disunion greatly prevailed. Examples: Cain, who slew his brother Abel; Esau, who fiercely hated his brother Jacob; Absalom, who sought to dethrone his own father, and committed fratricide; Judas, who betrayed his Lord and Master into the hands of his enemies.

2. No wonder; the nations were not yet redeemed, they had no peace with God; therefore they could have no peace with one another. What a change took place in the morals of the world when Christ had accomplished the work of Redemption! The Acts of the Apostles inform us that the first believers were all of one heart and one soul, that they lived in the most serene peace and beautiful union with one another.—*Acts*. 4: 32. The Gentiles, seeing the concord and fraternal charity of the Christians, were astonished, and said: "Behold, how they love one another! Even for their worst enemies they have no aversion or hatred, but only benevolence and love." Examples: St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—*Acts*. 7: 59; the Apostle James, who prayed for those who cast him down from the pinnacle of the temple in the words

of his Master: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" St. Paul, who says: "We are reviled, and we bless: we are persecuted and we suffer it."—*I. Cor.* 4: 12.

Whence this heavenly meekness and love, this admirable peacefulness of the first Christians, as well as of all that truly deserve the name of Christian? From the sacred wounds of Jesus, for they cry out to his followers: "Behold, Jesus is all love, and it was love that moved him to become man, to confer numberless benefits on men while upon earth, and at length to offer himself on the cross for our Redemption. Charity is his principal commandment, and the mark of his disciples; he wishes us to look upon ourselves as members of his body, as brothers and sisters, and live together in mutual cordial love and harmony." This is the language of the five sacred wounds. How could we be disciples of Christ, true Christians, if we should disregard this language, and live in disunion and enmity with one another?

PERORATION.

"Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body."—*Col.* 3: 15. Never forget how much you have cost our Saviour before he could say: *Peace be to you.* To acquire that peace for us, he died on the cross, and shed the last drop of his precious blood. *Keep peace with God,* and for this end shun every sin with the greatest care. Keep yourselves pure and undefiled, mortify your inordinate inclinations and passions, that you may not lose *peace with yourselves. Keep peace with your neighbor,* bear with one another, and have charity, which is the bond of perfection, and shun everything that can disturb harmony. Blessed are you, if you keep this triple peace all the days of your life. Consolation and heavenly joy will be yours, not only here, in this troubled sphere, but hereafter, when, departing hence, you hear those accents of greeting from the lips of the Prince of Peace, whose utterance is sweetness itself: *Peace be to you.* Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

PEACE.

Jesus said to his disciples: Peace be to you.—John 20: 19.

The gospel of this day speaks of two apparitions with which Christ our Lord favored his disciples, and at each of which he greeted them with the words: *Peace be to you.* The Apostles were full of anguish, for they feared, and not without reason, that they, like their divine Master, would be apprehended by the Jews, cast into prison, and perhaps executed. Would it not have been better if Jesus had promised them security from their enemies, or, as they were poor and despised, had procured for them honor and reputation, prosperity and success in their occupations? Why does he always repeat only these words: *Peace be to you?* Because peace is the most precious of all goods, and because without it nothing is able to make men contented or happy. We can say with truth that he who has peace is happy, whatever his condition or circumstances may be; but he who has no peace is unhappy, though he possess all that is esteemed and desired by the world. Let us consider to-day—

I. What a precious treasure peace is;
II. What is required for its preservation.

PART I.

What a precious treasure peace is, is evident—

1. *From this, that Jesus manifests himself as a particular friend and lover of peace.*

(*a.*) The Second Person of the adorable Trinity assumed human nature and appeared upon earth. When did this occur? At a time when there was peace upon the whole earth. The birth of our Saviour coincided with the very significant circumstance that the temple of Janus at Rome was closed, and this was never done except when there was peace. From Romulus to Cæsar Augustus, during an interval of more than seven hundred years, it had been closed only twice; first, in the reign of Numa Pompilius, and a second time during the peace that intervened be-

tween the first and the second Punic wars. The Romans were now for the third time at peace with all nations, the devastating wars were at an end, and peace reigned everywhere supreme. The tranquillity and universal peace which the world then enjoyed was a fitting figure of that spiritual peace which the eternal Son of God came to impart to poor sinful man, in order to present himself at his coming into the world as the Prince of Peace, as had been foretold by the Prophets, and to show the world that he loved nothing better than peace.

(*b.*) At his birth in the quiet little village of Bethlehem a multitude of the heavenly host appeared, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."—*Luke* 2: 13, 14. As God loves his own honor, so he also loves the peace of men; nay, this peace he seems to have more at heart than even his own honor, because, as St. Paul so beautifully and forcibly expresses it, "He made peace through the blood of his cross."—*Col.* 1: 20. Must not peace have been very dear to him, when, in order to restore it between heaven and earth, he shed the last drop of his precious blood on the cross?

(*c.*) His life on earth also gives evidence of his love of peace. Sending his disciples to preach the gospel, he says to them: "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to his house."—*Luke* 10: 5. Healing the sick and pardoning sinners, his last words were: "Go in peace." And did he not rebuke two of his disciples who would call fire from heaven upon a city of the Samaritans because they received them not? saying to them: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save."—*Luke* 9: 55, 56. So much did Jesus love peace.

(*d.*) Following his words and example, the Apostles everywhere preached peace. Wherever they preach the gospel they appear as messengers of peace. The New Testament contains twenty-one epistles, of which St. Paul wrote fourteen, St. John three, St. Peter two, St. James and St. Jude one each, and among all these epistles there is not one that does not contain many wishes for peace and admonitions to keep it. They all begin and end with salutations of peace, and it is to this peace that they ever return. Thus St. Peter exhorts: "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile; let him decline from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it."—*I. Pet.* 3: 10, 11. And St. Paul: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God."—*Heb.* 12: 14.

(*e.*) Instructed by Christ, the Church wishes peace to the faithful in her sacred functions, especially in the administration of the holy sacraments. The priest, after having baptized a child, says: *Go in peace.* The bishop says to every one confirmed when he dismisses him: *Peace be to you.* When the priest goes into the house of a sick person to administer the sacraments, he says: *Peace be to this house and to all that dwell therein.* And when the priest and the people pray for the dead, it is again peace for which they pray: *May they rest in peace.*

2. *From the fact that it really makes men happy.*

(*a.*) What salt is to food, peace is to life. The best dishes do not taste well when salt has been forgotten in their preparation; so all we may possess, good health, great riches, honor and reputation, cannot constitute the happiness of life. How unhappy are married people into whose house the spirit of dissension has entered! As soon as they open their eyes in the morning, anger and bitterness arise with them; they never exchange a friendly word, they quarrel from morning till night, they abuse each other and live in perpetual strife. It frequently happens that in consequence of this discord well-to-do families are reduced to poverty, and the word of Christ is verified: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation."—*Luke* 11:17.

If there be a happy life it is a peaceable life, and if any families and individuals can be considered happy, they are such as live in peace and harmony. Therefore St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "Nothing contributes so much to render life sweet and agreeable as peace. And nothing can be named that makes life sweet which does not in itself contain some element of peace. It is therefore certainly worth our while to investigate what is required for the preservation of the inestimable treasure of peace."

PART II.

To preserve peace we must—

1. *Have patience with the faults and frailties of our fellow-men.* We are all subject to many frailties and imperfections, and need the indulgence of others. Hence the Apostle says: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." —*Gal.* 6:2. Most dissensions arise because one will not yield to the other. One complains of the other, and why? On account of a fault which he notices in the other, and is not willing to put up with. I ought to think to myself: "I am anything but a saint; others find many things in me that are hard to bear; I will also have patience with their frailties." Let us look up to Jesus and

the saints, who had great forbearance with the faults of others, and who endured the greatest insults with heavenly patience.

2. *Take an interest in the prosperity and adversity of our neighbor.* It does any one good to find sympathizing souls; the joy is rendered thereby sweeter, and the misfortune more endurable. Hence the Apostle admonishes us with the words: "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep."—Example: Christ, who cried out to all that are sorely afflicted: "Come to me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* 11: 28), and who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and over Jerusalem. By sharing the joy and sorrow of our fellow-men we show that we are members of one body, having all things in common, mutually sharing happiness and pain, and on that account standing in undisturbed harmony with one another. While sincere sympathy unites hearts with one another, the want of sympathy alienates them; it hurts us in particular to see that others, especially our relatives, care nothing about our welfare, and in our adversity show themselves to be entirely indifferent.

3. *Be condescending in our intercourse with others.* By self-assertion, by tenacious adherence to one's own opinion, by stubborn contradiction, peace is many a time disturbed, and frequent occasion is given for protracted dissensions and law-suits; on the contrary, by gentle condescension peace is preserved and confirmed. Every one is pleased to notice that others think well of him, and pay some attention to his opinion; on the contrary, every one is more or less displeased to hear himself contradicted on every occasion. You must, therefore, if you wish to preserve peace, make it your rule to yield when yielding is not manifestly sinful, to give your opinion with calmness and dignity, and to keep silence when you see that saying more would be the occasion of strife. This is very important, especially for husband and wife, brother and sister, and all who live together and must live together, for peace can exist among them only when they are indulgent and not too much wedded to their own opinions.

4. *Conduct ourselves in our words and in our whole deportment kindly towards others.* "A mild answer breaketh wrath, but a harsh word stirred up fury."—*Prov.* 15: 1. We are men; harsh words are hard to bear and make us out of temper with him who utters them. It is therefore of the greatest importance that we deal with others kindly, and avoid everything harsh or offensive in our language and conduct. With a spoonful of honey you will entice more flies than with a barrel of vinegar. Above all, beware of raillery and sarcasm, for these are more injurious to

peace than anything else. They are injurious, though spoken only in jest and as witticisms, for no one likes to be ridiculed. We have many examples in which irony, sarcasm, and raillery caused not only a breach of the peace, but also quarrels and murders.

5. *Finally, we must not interfere in other people's concerns,* because this is one of the principal causes of dissension. You speak of the faults of others; those who hear you repeat what you said and add to it. Your neighbor hears of it, becomes angry, and dissension and enmity are the result. Do not meddle with the affairs of others; they do not concern you; let every one sweep before his own door; every one has enough to do to look after himself. But, above all, guard against tale-bearing. This is an abominable vice, which causes a great deal of mischief, destroys the peace of families, and foments discord and bitter feelings. "The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that are at peace. The tongue of a third person (which causes dissension between friends) hath disquieted many, and scattered them from nation to nation, it hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich, and hath overthrown the houses of great men... He that hearkeneth to it shall never have rest, neither shall he have a friend in whom he may repose."—*Ecclus.* 28: 15, *and seq.* What mischief do whispering and tale-bearing not cause among married people, and between neighbors and acquaintances! It is not necessary that what is carried to others should be of importance; little things frequently are sufficient to cause great enmities; a spark may cause a great conflagration. "The words of a tale-bearer are as it were simple, but they reach to the innermost part of the belly."—*Prov.* 26: 22. If therefore you desire to keep peace with others, beware of tale-bearing, and do not listen to tale-bearers.

PERORATION.

These are the rules which you must observe in order to preserve peace with your neighbor. Be indulgent in regard to the faults of others; sympathize with them in their joys and afflictions; be friendly and yielding in your intercourse with them; do not interfere in other people's business, and detest nothing so much as tale-bearing. Consider that peace is a blessing which makes us happy for time and eternity, and be resolved to make any sacrifice for its preservation or restoration. Be peaceable, that the words of Christ may be fulfilled in you: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."—*Matt.* 5: 9. Amen.

LOW SUNDAY.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THREE REMEDIES AGAINST RELAPSE INTO SIN.

Peace be to you.—John 20: 19.

What kind of peace is that which our Lord repeatedly wishes and really gives his disciples? Not peace with the world; with the world they never could have peace, for they were called to destroy its wickedness, its unbelief, and its vices. Hence we see that they were always hated, persecuted, and overwhelmed with injustices and sufferings of every description. The peace of Christ is sanctifying grace; he who possesses it is free from sin, is sanctified and justified, is a child of God and an heir of heaven. Why should a Christian in this blessed state not rejoice at that peace which surpasses all understanding (*Phil.* 4: 7), and which the world, with all its goods and joys, cannot give? I sincerely hope that you are all in the possession of this peace, for at Easter you have been to confession and received holy communion, you are in the state of grace, and your conscience is at rest and filled with heavenly consolation. Oh, that you would always preserve this peace and guard against nothing so much as against its loss by a relapse into sin. For this end employ the three following means—

I. Seek help from God;
II. Shun dangerous occasions;
III. Mortify yourselves.

PART I.

In order to preserve ourselves from a relapse into sin, we must, first of all, *seek help from God.*

1. *By the remembrance of the presence of God.* St. Basil says: "The frequent and earnest remembrance of the all-present God is one of the most effectual means against all aberrations and sins." He is right, for if we dare not sin in the presence of good people, how could we dare do so at the lively remembrance of the omnipresent God? What was it that enabled Joseph of Egypt to refuse his consent to the shameful desire of his wicked mistress? The remembrance of the omnipresent God. "How then can I do

this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"—*Gen.* 39: 9. What was it that strengthened the chaste Susanna, so that she would rather die than sin? Again the remembrance of the omnipresent God. "I am straitened on every side; for if I do this thing, it is death to me; and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."—*Dan.* 13, 22. 23. A disreputable woman one day met St. Ephrem, and made him a base overture. The Saint was at first indignant at her shameful conduct, but recollecting himself, he invited her to follow him. He conducted her to the market-place, where there was a great multitude of people, and said to her: "If you wish to sin, this is the right place." "How," said she, "could I do so in the sight of so many people? I should be ashamed." St. Ephrem replied: "Ah! you would be ashamed to sin before these people; should you not rather be ashamed before Him whose Eye sees everything and penetrates everywhere, who sees even the innermost part of our hearts?" These words made so deep an impression upon her heart that she repented of her sins and afterwards led an edifying life. Never lose sight of this fact that God sees you always and everywhere. He sees you when you rise, when you lie down, when you awake during the night, when you are at work, when you rest, when you enjoy a pleasure, when you are alone or in company. On every occasion, then, turn your thoughts to God and think of his presence. Do this especially in every temptation. Take to heart the admonition which the aged Tobias gave his son: "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God."—*Tob.* 4: 6.

2. *By prayer and the grace of God.* Our divine Saviour says: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house, whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished."—*Luke* 11: 24, 25. The house of which Christ here speaks is our heart; it is empty when the grace of God has departed from it, it is swept when there is no devotion, no fervor of prayer in it any longer, it is garnished when vain thoughts and the desire to please have crept into it. What happens now? "Then he (the evil spirit) goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."—*Luke* 11: 26. As the devil tempts men more vehemently after their conversion than before, who can help them so that they may not succumb? No one but God. "Unless the Lord keep the city, he watched in vain that keepeth it."—*Ps.* 126: 1. But in order that God may strengthen

us in temptation and defend us from sin, we must pray. Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26: 41. Pray *before the temptation;* recommend yourselves morning and evening and frequently during the day to the protection of God. Pray *in every temptation,* and cry out with the disciples of Jesus: "Lord, save us, we perish." Pray *after the temptation,* give thanks to God, with whose grace you have been able to overcome the temptation, and ask him for the future to assist you, that you may never be unfaithful to him.

Part II.

For preservation against a relapse into sin it is necessary *to avoid the occasion of sin.*

1. *The word of God* convinces us of this necessity. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it."—*Ecclus.* 3: 27. He who voluntarily exposes himself to the occasions of sin or remains in it, loves danger, and the result will be that he will sin, and risk his eternal salvation. In the Book of Proverbs we read: "Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?"—*Prov.* 6: 27, 28. The Fathers of the Church also caution us against the occasion of sin. St. Augustine says: "Fly from the occasions of sin, if you wish to gain the victory." St. Isidore: "Lying near the serpent you cannot remain long unhurt." And St. Chrysostom: "If you see a precipice, and wish not to fall into it, do not go near it."

2. *History.* It furnishes examples of the saddest kind, showing us how those who did not shun the occasion fell into grievous sin. Why did Eve transgress the commandment of God and sin? Because she did not shun the occasion of sin. If she had not gone near the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the devil could not have tempted and enticed her to sin. Dina, the daughter of the patriarch Jacob, remained pure and innocent as long as she did not expose herself to the occasion of sin; but going once to Sichem, to see the ornaments of the women of that city, she fell a prey to temptation, and lost her innocence.—*Gen.* 34. Peter adhered to our Lord with the greatest fidelity, and assured him that he would never deny him, if it should even cost his life. But when the occasion presented itself he proved to be so weak that he denied his Lord and Master three times.

3. *Experience.* We see many young people yielding to drunkenness, to gambling, to impurity, and other vices. Whence does this come? Mostly from the proximate occasion. They frequent

bad company; they visit houses where there is no discipline, no fear of God; they visit saloons, theatres, balls and other places, where everything that they see and hear excites their sensuality, and allures them to sin; they keep company with persons of the opposite sex—and the result is that they forget God, become more careless and finally fall victims to sin. Among a hundred there is scarcely one who of himself comes into the snare of Satan; almost all fall in consequence of the proximate occasions into which they are unfortunately drawn.

What else follows from this but that every one who sincerely wishes to amend his life and to preserve himself from a relapse, must be resolved to avoid the occasion of sin. Hence it is the decision of theologians that a sinner who does not, in so far as it is possible to him, shun the proximate occasions of sin, cannot be absolved. St. Alphonsus says: "All those who are in the proximate occasion of sin cannot be absolved till they have removed the occasion or have at least promised to remove it, in which latter case the confessor must be assured of the sincerity of their promise." The proximate occasion must be shunned, even if it be attended with great difficulties and impediments. This is the meaning of the words of Christ: "If thy hand, or thy foot, scandalize thee, cut it off, end cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life mained or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire."—*Matt.* 18: 8, 9. If it would cause you as much pain to separate yourselves from the proximate occasion as the cutting off of a hand or a foot, the plucking out an eye; or if that which the proximate occasion offers you would be as dear and agreeable to you and an eye, a hand or a foot, you must nevertheless give up the occasion, for otherwise you could not preserve yourselves from sin and eternal damnation.

Make to-day the resolution for the future to shun, at any cost and sacrifice, all those occasions which have heretofore caused you to sin. Give up all sinful company and keep away from all persons, places, and entertainments that are for you the proximate occasion of sin.

PART III.

If we wish to preserve ourselves from relapse into sin, we must mortify ourselves, according to the words of Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 14. This mortification is twofold:

1. *Exterior*, which consists in the curbing of the inordinate desires of the body and the senses. "Therefore, brethren," writes the Apostle, "we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."—*Rom.* 8: 12, 13. We must mortify the craving of the appetite; for the mortification of it is, as St. Vincent of Paul says, the A B C of the spiritual life, and he who cannot overcome himself in this respect will never overcome the other vices which are still more untractable. We must not ruin our body by too much tenderness, by effeminate clothing, by immoderate enjoyments, by protracted idleness, rendering it unfit for the battle with temptation and for the practice of the Christian virtues. Lastly, we must mortify our senses, especially the eyes and ears, that they may not be open doors, through which Satan enters into our heart. St. Aloysius fasted three days each week on bread and water, and laid pieces of wood in his bed, and scourged himself even to blood.—*St. Francis Borgia* (10*th Oct.*), *St. Peter of Alcantara* (19*th Oct.*).

2. *Interior*, which also consists in the bridling of our inordinate inclinations and desires. This interior mortification is more necessary than the exterior; nay, were this wanting, the exterior would be of no account. The Scribes and the Pharisees mortified themselves exteriorly in many ways; they kept night watches, fasted strictly, said long prayers on their knees; nevertheless Christ frequently expressed his displeasure with them, saying to his hearers: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 20. How necessary interior mortification is for the preservation from sin we see exemplified in Cain. God had admonished him to subdue his evil desire.—*Gen.* 4: 7. But what happened when he did not follow this admonition of God? His evil desire caused him to lay violent hands on his brother and to slay him. Hence St. James says: "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death."—*James* 1: 14, 15. We must, therefore, practise interior mortification with greater fervor than exterior. If sinful inclinations arise in our hearts, for example, inclinations to pride, avarice, impurity, envy, anger, hatred, we must stifle them at once so that they may not lead us to sin. Let us pass no day without some interior mortification, since on it depends the keeping of our conscience in purity and the perfecting of our life.

PERORATION.

These are the three means which you must diligently employ, that you may preserve yourselves from every relapse into sin. Seek help from God, strengthen and fortify yourselves against the temptations to sin by remembering the presence of God and by fervent prayer. Shun the proximate occasions of sin; lead, as much as possible, a retired life, avoid places, persons, and societies which have caused you to sin, or at least to experience great temptations. Mortify yourselves exteriorly and interiorly, subject the flesh to the spirit, the spirit to God and his holy law. And if such a life appears hard, call to mind these words of Christ: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—*Matt.* 11: 12. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Epistle. *I. Pet.* 2: 21-25. Dearly beloved: Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore onr sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE SACRED PASSION.

St. Peter, whom Jesus made his Vicar on earth and the visible head of his Church, wrote two epistles to the Christians in Asia Minor. They were very dear to him, for he had converted them to Christianity. In both epistles he admonishes them to lead a life worthy of Christians, to love one another, to perform faithfully the duties of their state of life, and to be constant in faith; at the same time he warns them against false teachers and seducers, especially against those who called into doubt or denied the second coming of Christ. The lesson for to-day is a small portion of the first epistle, in which St. Peter speaks of the passion of Christ and answers the two following questions:

I. How has he suffered?
II. Why has he suffered?

Part I.

Dearly beloved, Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps; this is an invitation for us to take Christ for our pattern, and to suffer as he suffered. *How did he suffer?* He suffered—

1. *Innocently*, for he suffered as one *who did no sin, neither was guile fond in his mouth.*

(*a.*) Christ was innocence and holiness itself. He could cry out to his worst enemies: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" *John* 8: 46. Judas, his betrayer, confessed before the High Council: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."—*Matt.* 27: 4. Pilate, having made a careful investigation of the life and works of Christ, repeatedly declared him innocent, and that he could find in him nothing worthy of death; and with the same breath that he condemned him to death he said: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it."—*Matt.* 27: 24. The Roman centurion, who was present at the crucifixion, exclaimed: "Indeed this was a just man."—*Luke* 23: 47. "Indeed this man was the Son of God."—*Mark* 15: 39.

(*b.*) To suffer innocently, as Christ did, is, properly speaking, impossible for us, for even if we did not commit the smallest fault during our whole life, we should still be contaminated with original sin, and, on this account alone no one could say. "I suffer innocently." In the mean time we all have personal sins, and perhaps, not only venial, but also mortal sins, and hence we cannot say that we suffer innocently. But our sins, original as well as actual, are remitted to us. Very well, but sufferings and tribulations of every sort, and death, are consequences of sin, which, after the remission thereof, still remain. Consequently, every one must acknowledge: Lord, that which I suffer I have deserved already from my mother's womb, but still more by the many sins I have committed myself. The sufferings which come upon us can be called undeserved only in the sense that they are inflicted unjustly upon us by men. Thus the Apostles, the martyrs, and pious Christians in general suffered and are suffering unjustly and of them St. Paul says: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—*II. Tim.* 3: 12. If in such a way we suffer innocently, we must deem ourselves happy, since Christ says: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 10.

2. *Meekly*, without returning evil for evil; *who, when he was reviled, did not revile; and when he suffered, he threatened not.*

(*a.*) What a heavenly meekness did not Christ manifest amid all the outrages and sufferings with which his enemies overwhelmed him! The Jews utter the most horrible blasphemies against him; they call him a Samaritan, a confederate of the devil; he does not give way to anger, but defends himself with

all calmness; the Jews take up stones to kill him, he goes out of their way; Judas betrays him with a kiss, he does not reject the wretch, but full of sadness says: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" —*Matt.* 26: 50. The soldiers mock him, spit upon his sacred face, strike him on the cheeks, place a crown of thorns upon his head, put a reed into his hand for a sceptre. He permits it all, and not a word of resentment escapes his lips. He is mocked even on the cross, and he opens his mouth only to pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—*Luke* 23: 34. Is there any meekness that could be compared with that of Christ? Does he not cry out to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart?"—*Matt.* 11: 29.

(*b.*) Oh, that his example would sink deeply into our hearts and move us to accept and bear in the spirit of meekness all that we must endure from our fellow-men! Can any suffering fall upon us, that could be compared with the sufferings of Christ? Have we ever been mocked, reviled, blasphemed, and abused as he was? And what is he, and what are we? He, the Son of God, true God, and we, miserable creatures; he, the infinitely holy, and we, sinners by nature; he, all love for men, and we frequently so cold, insensible, so indifferent towards our neighbor. And should we not meekly endure insults and offenses? Should we be angry with those who offend us, hate them, and bear them ill-will? Ah, what kind of Christians should we be! Oh, let us follow our meek Redeemer! By patiently enduring and suffering we win his heart and obtain his graces and life everlasting: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."—*Matt.* 5: 4.

3. *Voluntarily, for he "delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly."*

(*a.*) Isaias says (53: 7) of him: "He was offered because it was his own will." Jesus himself affirms that no one can take his life away from him, but that he voluntarily lays it down. "No man taketh it (my life) away from me; but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again."—*John* 10: 18. Could the Jews have abused and killed him, if he had not willed it himself? He was not only true man, but also true God, consequently in the possession of divine power. He showed also that his enemies could not have done him the least harm if he had wished to resist them. They intended one day to throw him down from the precipice and kill him with stones, but he disappeared out of their midst. And at his words: "I am he," the soldiers "went backward and fell to the ground." —*John* 18: 6. Therefore he suffered voluntarily.

(*b.*) We also should suffer voluntarily, at least in the sense that we accept sufferings willingly from the hand of God. To suffer is our lot here below. "Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all."—*Ecclus.* 40: 1. But everything depends upon our bearing our sufferings patiently. He who bears them with impatience feels their weight doubly heavy, loses all merit for heaven, and renders himself guilty of punishment before God, since impatience is sinful. He who bears his cross willingly and patiently profits much; it preserves him from the inordinate love of the world and from sin, elevates his mind to God, infuses into his soul a desire for things eternal, blots out the temporal punishment of his sins, and increases his merit for heaven. The saints considered this, and for that reason they suffered not only with patience, but with joy. Thus the Apostles went from the presence of the Council, by whose orders they had been scourged, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. St. Teresa said: "Let me suffer or die;" and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi: "Lord, not to die, but to suffer." Let us then patiently carry the cross which God sees fit to put on our shoulders, that we may experience its blessings.

PART II.

St. Peter teaches us also *why Jesus suffered.* He suffered *for us,* that is, for our good, to redeem and save us.

1. *Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree.* Peter teaches that Christ by his death on the cross blotted out our guilt, that his death is a death of propitiation, by which the dominion of sin was destroyed. Every sin makes us guilty before God, for he who commits the least sin refuses that which is due to him, viz., honor, love and obedience. As every debtor has the obligation of satisfying his creditor and of paying his debts, so we are obliged to pay the debts which we have contracted by our sins, or, in other words, to make satisfaction for the offense offered him by our sins. But we could not do this for the simple reason that every sin is, as regards God, an infinite guilt, and cannot be remitted by us men, who, being creatures, are capable only of doing finite things. As the servant in the gospel was unable to pay the debt of ten thousand talents to his lord, so we are even less able to pay the debt which we have contracted before God. That which no man and not even an angel could do, Christ, the God-Man, did; he has by his death on the cross perfectly satisfied divine justice; his blood which he freely shed to the last drop, is, as it were, the price he paid to blot out our guilt.

Hence St. Peter in another place writes: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—*I. Pet.* 1: 18, 19. And St. Paul says that "In Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace." —*Ephes.* 1: 7. If a man were to pay a debt for us which we never could pay and thereby procure for us liberty and life, we should be grateful to him all the days of our life, and should we not be thankful to Christ, who satisfied for our guilt with his precious blood and delivered us from eternal death? But how do many Christians show their gratitude for this unspeakable grace? They crucify him anew by their sins.

2. *That we, being dead to sins, should live to justice.* In these words the Apostle expresses the happy state in which we have been placed through Jesus Christ, and also the obligations which this state imposes upon us.

(*a.*) Christ by his passion and death has merited for us the grace of justification, i. e., from the state of sin we are restored to the state of justice and holiness. We owe it to the infinite merits of Christ, that in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance original and actual sins, with the eternal punishments due to them, are remitted to us, wherefore St. John writes: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."—*I. John* 1: 7, and St. Paul: "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (that is, for those who by faith and baptism are incorporated with Christ), who walk not according to the flesh." —*Rom.* 8: 1. In the same way we owe it to the merits of Christ, that we are sanctified in the sacraments. For if we receive in them the grace of sanctification, not only what is sinful and culpable in our soul is blotted out and destroyed, but what is good and salutary is communicated to us, the love of God, holiness and justice. Something similar is done with us as with a stem on which is engrafted a fine healthy cutting. The tree is entirely changed; it is no longer unproductive, but yields good fruit. Hence St. Paul says of the Corinthians, that before they were converted to Christianity and the merits of Redemption were applied to them, they were contaminated with all kinds of sins and vices, but now they are washed, sanctified and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God. —*I. Cor.* 6: 9-11.

(*b.*) Jesus having acquired for us the grace of justification by his passion and death on the cross, we are obliged to preserve this grace, to sin no more, and to walk in justice and holiness.

If we should sin again, we should deprive ourselves of the fruit of Redemption, and the words of Peter would be applicable to us: "If flying from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than, after they have known it to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them."—*II. Pet.* 2: 20, 21. Shun every sin, at least every mortal sin, that you may not lose the grace of justification, which Christ has purchased for you at so great a price—with his precious blood.

3. *By whose stripes you were healed.* The healing, which was effected by the wounds, that is, by the passion and death of Christ, is the result of sanctifying grace and of the actual graces which enable us to preserve sanctifying grace. If we depended on our natural strength alone, we could not persevere in justice, for "we are," as the Apostle says, "not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. We need the grace of God to overcome temptations, to practice meritorious works, to keep the commandments of God and to persevere in justice to the end. And even this grace Christ has merited for us by his passion and death; therefore he says of himself: "I am the vine; you the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."—*John* 15: 5. All divine graces are acquired for us at the price of the passion and death of Christ, and to every grace we receive adheres a drop of his precious blood.

PERORATION.

In conclusion St. Peter says *You were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.* Sheep going astray deserve pity, since they cannot help themselves; they are in danger of dying of hunger or thirst, of falling into some abyss, of being devoured by wolves. This was the condition of mankind before their vocation to the faith. What a grace and blessing for us that we are converted to Jesus Christ and are within his fold! He is, in truth, the shepherd and bishop of our souls, for he loves us and vouchsafes to extend to us the loving protection of his Providence, guarding us as the apple of his eye, and sheltering us under the shadow of his wings. Let us follow his voice and guidance, so that on the great day of judgment we may find a place among his sheep and be called to the joys of everlasting life. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL. *John* 10: 11-16. At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD, AND WE HIS SHEEP.

Christ had given sight to a man born blind.—*John* 9. This miracle, which caused a great sensation, had come to the ears of the Pharisees, who summoned the man to appear before them. When he attested the miracle, and defended Christ against their unjust accusations, they became so angry and enraged that they cursed him and expelled him as an apostate from the Jewish Church. By this action the Pharisees showed themselves to be bad shepherds, who, instead of keeping the sheep together and protecting them, scatter and kill them. From this the divine Saviour took occasion to bring before them the parable of the good shepherd. He shows in this parable that he is the good shepherd, whom the Prophets had already foretold (*Is.* 40: 11, *Ezech.* 34: 23, *Zach.* 11: 4), and that he was not, like the leaders of the Jews, seeking his own interest, but the welfare of his sheep, and that he was about to lay down his life for them.

We will consider this parable a little more closely, and see—

I. How Jesus proves himself so be the good shepherd;
II. How we must prove ourselves to be his good sheep.

PART I.

Christ with perfect justice calls himself the good shepherd, for—

1. *He gives his life for his sheep: "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."*

(*a.*) We know of no shepherd whose love for his sheep has gone so far as to sacrifice his life for them, for it would be madness for a man to give his life for animals. But what is man compared with God? Certainly much less than an animal compared with man, for though man on account of his immortal soul and other natural and supernatural gifts, stands incomparably higher than all animals, he is, like them, a creature and a finite being, whilst God, the Creator, is an Infinite Being. Now Christ, who is not only true man, but also true God, has offered his life for us on the cross. He gave up everything for our sake, because he loved us, and proved his love by the sacrifice of his life.

(*b.*) Christ himself says: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—*John* 15: 13. His love went further still, for he gave his life not only for his friends, but even for his enemies; he died for all, even for his enemies and murderers; nay, properly speaking, he did not die for any friend, but only for enemies, since all men, being sinners, were his enemies. Oh, who can fathom the depth of the love of Jesus for us.

(*c.*) What he did once on Calvary, where he offered himself on the cross in a bloody manner, he does daily in an unbloody manner and will continue to do to the end of time. He daily offers himself, on thousands of altars, for men in an unbloody manner in order to apply to them the merits of his passion and death. How Jesus loves us! Can he not truly say: *I am the good shepherd?* Should not his love for us urge us to make sacrifices for him? What sacrifices? The sacrifices of exterior and interior mortification and of Christian love and mercy. Our love for him must not merely be a sentimental love.

2. *He protects his sheep. "The hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep."*

(*a.*) The hireling cares nothing for the sheep, because they are not his own; therefore, if the wolf breaks into the fold, he

flies, so that the wolf without hindrance can steal and scatter the sheep. Christ is not a cowardly, self-interested hireling; on the contrary, he is the good shepherd, who considers himself the owner of the sheep, who takes upon himself the responsibility of defending them from the attacks of rapacious wolves, and protects them from all harm. As such a shepherd he has exhibited himself for the last eighteen hundred years. By how many and powerful enemies has the Church not been attacked since the beginning! What terrible persecutions has she not suffered! She was scarcely established when the time of the struggle commenced; for three hundred years she saw the blood of her children flow in streams, and her martyrs are numbered by millions. And these persecutions were repeated, if not on the whole earth, at least in various countries, through all the centuries, and they are repeated in our days. Besides exterior enemies, the Church has always had enemies within her own bosom. Had not our Lord a Judas among his Apostles? There have always been false teachers, heresiarchs, etc., who calumniated their holy Mother the Church, and persecuted her with the greatest hatred, instigated even the temporal power against her, and, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, labored to destroy her. But, behold! all these enemies could not prevail against her. As a good shepherd defends his flock against all the attacks of rapacious animals, so Christ has at all times espoused the cause of the Church, and defended her against interior and exterior enemies. The promise which he made that the gates of hell should not prevail against her has stood the test of eighteen hundred years and more and will hold good for all time to come. Let us not be discouraged when we see the Church again suffering great tribulation in these days. Christ, the good shepherd, is her protector, and though adversaries without number appear, they will not prevail against her; as up to this time, so in the future she will triumph over all her enemies. This is our hope which is laid up in our bosom.

(*b.*) We also have sheep which, according to the example of Christ, the good shepherd, we must protect. Such sheep, Christian parents, are your children, who, in their youthful levity and inexperience, are exposed to great dangers, especially now-a-days, when the world is so much given to wickedness, and virtue and the fear of God disappear more and more from the earth. Watch over them, keep them as much as possible from evil associations, and allow them no intercourse with irreligious people so that they may not fall victims to them. Consider that one day you must give a rigorous account of the training of your children. Moreover, each of you is the shepherd of a sheep—your own soul, which ought to be very dear to you, because if it

is lost, all is lost for eternity. "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt.* 16: 26. Let the care of your soul be your most important affair, and do all you can to preserve it from sin, to keep it in the grace of God, and one day bring it into heaven.

3. *He knows his sheep*, as he says himself: *I am the good shepherd, and I know mine.*

(*a.*) As a shepherd knows his sheep, so Christ, the good shepherd, knows his. He knows those who are his disciples. But he knows his own, not only externally from their personal appearance, but interiorly; he knows what they think, wish, desire, and aim at; he knows what troubles they have, what they need, what is good or evil, expedient or injurious to them. Oh, what a consolation for us that we can say: Jesus, the good shepherd, knows me. He who knows everything, knows also all about me; my necessities, my troubles and sufferings are known to him; he sees my struggles, hears my sighs, and ordains everything for my good.

(*b.*) When Jesus says that he knows his sheep, he means that he loves them, for the word "know" is used in various passages of Holy Writ for "love." Thus: "Thou hast found grace before me, and thee I have known by name" (*Ex.* 33: 17), and "The Lord knoweth who are his."—*II. Tim.* 2: 19. By the words: *I know mine*, Jesus expresses the greatness of his love. But true love is active. He not only entertains the most benevolent feelings towards us, but he also does us a vast amount of good. Who is able to express with words the graces which continually flow to us from his hands? Is it not he who nourishes us with his divine word, nay, with his sacred body and precious blood; who daily offers himself for us in holy mass, purifies and sanctifies us in the sacraments, and sitting at the right hand of his Father as our high priest and advocate, pleads our cause? Oh, let us show ourselves grateful for his active love, and make good use of the graces which he unceasingly imparts.

4. He is anxious to bring in also those sheep which are outside the one fold: *Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring.*

The first sheep that Christ called into his fold were the Jews. He came, lived and worked among them; they were to be the first to partake of the grace of salvation, because the promise of the Messias was first made to their forefathers, and to them; they were to be the firstlings of the Church: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel."—*Matt.* 15: 24. But be-

sides the Jews, there were millions of Gentiles; these were the *other sheep*, these also he would make partakers of the fruit of redemption, and call them into his fold, that is, into his Church. For this end he commissioned his Apostles to go and teach all nations, to baptize them and receive them into his Church. And what our Lord first did through his Apostles, he has done at all times, and still does to-day through their successors, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. In his name, for the last eighteen hundred years, thousands of missionaries have preached the gospel in heathen countries, and increased the number of the children of the Church. No shepherd can labor so hard to increase his flock as Christ does for the propagation of his Church; his love is all-embracing and unceasingly urges him to save all, since he died for all.

Part II.

1. To prove ourselves good sheep, we *must know Christ, our good shepherd*, for he says: *Mine know me.* We know him—

(*a.*) *By means of faith.* It is faith that tells us that Christ is the Son of God, became man and appeared on earth to teach, to redeem, and to save us. It is faith that tells us what we must do to please God and to obtain our final end. It is by faith that we come to the knowledge of the means of salvation, which are ordained for our purification and sanctification. If we did not believe in Christ, it would be impossible for us to know him. He therefore who wishes to be a sheep of Christ must believe all the sacred truths which Christ proposes to our belief by his Church. How is it with your faith? Do you firmly believe all that the Catholic Church teaches? Are you prepared to make every sacrifice for the holy Catholic faith? Does your life correspond with your belief?

(*b.*) *By means of love.* As soon as by the light of faith we have come to the knowledge of Christ and of all that he has done for our Redemption, we must show by our deeds that we love him above all things. How could it be possible for us not to love him when we consider his ineffable love for us and the countless graces and benefits which he bestows upon us? But if we truly love him, we shall frequently direct our thoughts to him, and excite ourselves to devout acts of humility, contrition and thanksgiving. It will give us pleasure to speak of him and to hear him spoken of; we shall make his life, actions and sufferings the subject of our meditation; we shall offer to him daily our labors, joys and troubles; we shall mortify our inordinate inclinations,

and manfully renounce what displeases him, and lastly, we shall in all things do his holy will joyfully and perseveringly.

2. *We must hear his voice*, as he says: *They shall hear my voice.* The sheep hear the voice of their shepherd and follow his guidance. So we too must hear the voice of our shepherd, Jesus, and be governed by him, if we wish to be good sheep. But he no longer walks visibly on earth; how then can we hear his voice? He speaks to us—

(*a.*) *Interiorly, by the voice of our conscience.* By its means he is incessantly laboring for our salvation. He tells us what we are to do, what to avoid, he exhorts us to fulfil our duties, he warns us against evil, he makes us the most glorious promises, if we live according to his word and example, but threatens us with the severest punishments, if we turn our backs upon him and commit sin: he inundates our heart with holy joy when we do good, but fills us with disquietude, fear and anguish when we commit sin. Oh, that we would at all times listen to the voice of our good shepherd, who speaks to us through our conscience.

(*b.*) *Exteriorly, through the Church.* She is his representative on earth and as it were, the ever-living and ever-present Christ. She has her commission from him to announce his divine doctrine to all nations, to administer the sacraments, and to oblige them to observe all his commandments and her ordinances. It is the sacred duty of every one to hear the Church and to obey her: "He that heareth you heareth me; he that despiseth you, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."—*Luke* 10: 16. "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. Learn from this, how wrong those Christians are who will not hear their priests and pastors, the ambassadors of the Church; who disregard their admonitions, resist their ordinances, despise, revile, slander and calumniate them. Whatever they do against a priest, Jesus considers as done against himself. Reflect on this, and be obedient to your pastors, for "obedience is better than sacrifice."

3. *We must belong to his fold.* Jesus indicates this in the words: *There shall be one fold and one shepherd.*

There is but one shepherd, Jesus Christ: and there is but one fold, the Catholic Church established by Christ. As he is and will be the pastor of all, Jews and Gentiles, so he requires all men, Jews and Gentiles, to enter into his Church, that upon the whole earth there may be but one Church, as there is but one shepherd. He who does not belong to this Church—at least

interiorly—to her soul—cannot work out his salvation and be saved, for the Church of Christ is the only institution for the salvation of men; only in her and through her can everything be obtained that is requisite for salvation, the *true faith*, the *true commandments, and the true means of grace.* "The Lord increased daily together such as should be saved."—*Acts.* 2: 47.

Consider it the greatest grace that from your infancy you belong to the holy Catholic Church, for as a member of it you follow the road which alone leads to heaven, and you possess all the means you need for salvation. But do not forget that much will be required of those to whom much has been given, and "labor the more, that by good works you make sure your calling and election."—*II. Pet.* 1: 10.

PERORATION.

Since Christ is so good a shepherd, who loves us dearly, protects us and even gives his life for us, let us exert ourselves to be good sheep. Let us adhere to him with faithful hearts, love him above all things, and ever do that which is enjoined on us as a duty, either interiorly, by our conscience, or exteriorly, by the pastors of our souls, and let us be good Catholics as regards faith and practice, so that as good sheep we may be united in heaven with our good shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THE ONLY SAVING CHURCH.

And other sheep I have that are not of this fold, them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice. and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.—John 10: 16.

Our Lord calls himself the good shepherd who loves his sheep so dearly as to give his life for them. Who are Christ's sheep? All men, Jews and Gentiles. The first sheep called into the fold, that is, the Church, were the Jews; the other sheep are the Gentiles. He has redeemed all men; it is his will that not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles, shall be saved. He therefore tore

down the partition between the Jews and the Gentiles and united them in one communion, so that, as there is but one shepherd, here can be but one fold, that is, *one Church.* This one Church is the holy Catholic Church, for she alone, according to the testimony of history, is the Church established by Christ. Let us rejoice in being members of the Catholic Church, for she is the *only saving Church,* that is, the only Church in which we can work out our salvation. We will consider this important truth to-day, and answer the two following questions:

I. Why can we be saved only in the Catholic Church?
II. What are we to believe in regard to the salvation of those who do not belong to the Catholic Church?

PART I.

There is no salvation except in the Catholic Church—

1. *Because we find in her alone all that Christ has ordained for obtaining salvation.* In order to be saved, we must—

(*a.*) *Believe all that Christ has taught.* "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."—*John* 3: 36. These and many other passages mean that whosoever wishes to be saved must have the faith taught by Christ. Where is this faith to be found? Only in the Catholic Church. It is the Catholic Church alone that Christ established to preach his doctrine to the end of time. For this end he entrusted his holy doctrine to her with the commission always to preserve it pure and undefiled, to explain it infallibly and to propagate it. And the Church needing for that purpose the divine assistance, he promised her the Holy Ghost, to abide with her, to guide her, and to instruct her in all truth. "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth."—*John* 14: 16, 17. "The Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."—*John* 14: 26. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth."—*John* 16: 13. By reason of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth."—*I. Tim.* 3: 15.

This was the teaching of the Fathers of the Church from the beginning. St. Irenæus says: "Truth must not be sought elsewhere than in the Church, because the Apostles deposited in her, as in

a rich treasury, the whole truth in its fulness, so that every one who wills can draw life from her." The bishops assembled at Carthage, under St. Cyprian, at the beginning of the third century, unanimously declare: "Our mother the Catholic Church at all times preserved and will preserve, the truth pure, for she is governed and taught by God; she is the one and only teacher of salvation." Even Luther says: "He that will know anything of Christ, must not presume to build for himself his own bridge to heaven, by his own reason, but he must go to the Church and ask her." As the Catholic Church alone possesses and teaches the true faith necessary for salvation, it follows that we can be saved only in her bosom. Hence the Jews and Gentiles, and all religious societies separated from the Church, are not in the way of salvation, because they are destitute of the first requisite for salvation, *the true faith.*

(*b.*) *Do what Christ has commanded.* Our Blessed Lord strictly requires us to obey him, the Supreme Lawgiver, and he makes eternal salvation depend on it. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me."—*John* 14: 21. He, then, who does not keep the commandments of Christ, does not love him, and "if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."—*I. Cor.* 16: 22. "He that despiseth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."—*John* 12: 48. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city."—*Matt.* 10: 14, 15. He who wishes to be saved must do what Christ commands. But where is to be found what Christ commands? Only in the Catholic Church, for she is the infallible teacher of the Christian religion both in regard to faith and morals. From this it follows again that only in the Catholic Church can one live acceptably to God and be saved.

3. *Make use of the means of grace, which Christ has ordained for our salvation.* These means of grace are especially prayer and the sacraments. Baptism is absolutely necessary for all. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* 3: 5. The Sacrament of Penance is necessary for all those who, after baptism, have grievously sinned. Christ designates this Sacrament as the only means by which the remission of sins committed after baptism can be obtained: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven."—*John* 20: 23. With regard to the other sacraments, suffice it to say, that three of them, namely Confirmation, Holy Eucharist,

and Extreme Unction, are necessary to salvation in so far as it would be a grievous sin to neglect their reception through carelessness or contempt. Now, since all non-Christians have no sacraments at all, not even baptism, they are evidently not in the way of salvation. Most Christians separated from the Catholic Church have no sacraments, with the exception of baptism, because they have no priests who alone can administer the sacraments perfectly and validly. And although some are saved by means of baptism administered in the denominations separated from the Catholic Church, yet none of these can be called the saving Church, because they do not possess all the means of grace which are necessary for salvation to men in all the various circumstances of life. In what a terrible state then are all non-Catholics as soon as they lose the grace of baptism! They have no Sacrament of Penance, and, consequently, no means of obtaining forgiveness of their sins committed after baptism. You see then the Catholic Church is the only institution of salvation established by Christ, that is, the only saving Church.

2. *Because the word of God emphatically assures us that we must belong to the Catholic Church established by Christ, if we wish to be saved.*

(*a.*) "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. Heathens and public sinners cannot be saved, therefore neither can those who do not hear the Church. "He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."—*Luke* 10: 16. He who despises the teachers sent by the Church and does not submit to them, is a traitor to Christ and his heavenly Father; and how can such a one be saved? Christ also makes use of several parables, to prove that outside the Church there is no salvation. Thus he compares her to a vineyard, to a supper, and to a sheepfold. Only those who labored in the vineyard received wages; those who appeared not at the supper remained excluded from it for ever, and those sheep which were not in the fold were of the number of those that had gone astray.

(*b.*) This is also the teaching of the Fathers. St. Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostle says: "Brethren, fall not into errors, for he who follows a man who makes a schism will not obtain the inheritance of heaven." St. Cyprian: "He who separates himself from the true Church, and associates with an adulterous one, is excluded from all the promises which are made to the Church. Such a one will never obtain the promises of Christ. Nay, even martyrdom will profit him nothing; he may be put to death, but

he will not be crowned." St. Augustine: "Outside the Church you can have everything except salvation." From this it is evident that one can be saved only in the Catholic Church.

What are we to believe in regard to the salvation of those who do not belong to the Catholic Church?

Part II.

Who do not belong to the Catholic Church?

1. *The unbaptized:* Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and, in general, all non-Christians, for baptism is the door through which all must enter into the Church. What about their salvation? We must distinguish between the children that die before they have come to the years of reason, and adults. All the children of such persons dying before the age of reason, are in the same position as Christian parents' children that die without baptism, of whom St. Augustine says: "I do not say that the children who die without baptism suffer so great a punishment that it would have been better for them not to have been born. Although I cannot decide in what their condemnation consists or how great it will be, yet I do not dare to assert that it would have been better for these children not to be, than to be in such a state. All theologians teach that no one will be condemned to the pains of hell on account of original sin alone. But at the same time they teach that original sin as well as every other sin, prevents entrance into heaven. We may admit that children who die with the defilement of original sin will enjoy a kind of natural beatitude. With regard to adult persons, the whole question centres on this, whether they live according to the law which God has inscribed in every man's heart. If they do not live according to this law, they act against their better knowledge and conscience, and there is no doubt that they will be damned. But if they live according to this law they will not be damned, for God condemns no one who serves him according to his conscientious conviction. But whether they go to heaven or not we do not know. Perhaps in their case the baptism of desire can be admitted, with which they may be saved, since it supplies that of water. Many fathers of the Church, and theologians, admit that God leads the unbaptized who earnestly desire the truth and serve him with a sincere heart, in a wonderful way to the faith, as we know he did the centurion Cornelius.

2. *Heretics and schismatics,* of whom St. Augustine says: "The heretics by a false opinion with regard to God violate *faith itself,*

and schismatics remove themselves by impious divisions *from brotherly love*, though they believe what we believe. Therefore a heretic does not belong to the Catholic Church, for *God loves his Church;* and a schismatic does not, *for the Church loves her neighbor.* Concerning the salvation of heretics and schismatics we must distinguish again. If their heresy or schism is culpable, or maliciously formal, they cannot be saved, heresy and schism being grievous sins. Heresy and schism are culpable in all those who, although convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church, do not embrace it. They cannot and must not appeal to the difficulties with which that step is attended, since for the true faith we must be willing and prepared to make any and every sacrifice: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."—*Matt.* 10 : 37. As heretics and schismatics through their own fault we must count those who would be able to ascertain the truth, if they seriously inquired about it, yet neglect to do so from indifference or other culpable reasons. Therefore, St. Augustine says: "*Involuntary ignorance* will not be imputed to you, but your *neglecting* to learn what you ought to know." If, however, heretics and schismatics are *invincibly* ignorant and absolutely do not know their error, and at the same time zealously serve God, they can be saved; for material error is involuntary and therefore not a sin; but salvation is rendered very difficult to those who are not culpably erring, because of the want of many means of grace. To mention only one thing, they have no sacraments, with the exception of baptism; and the Sacrament of Penance is so very necessary for salvation. They resemble the poor, who strive to satisfy their hunger and thirst with only a little pure water and a dry crust of bread, whilst they could sit with us Catholics at a rich banquet and have all the means of salvation in abundance.

3. *The excommunicated*, that is, those who on account of great crimes are excluded from all ecclesiastical communion. An excommunicated person is deprived of all the rights and graces which flow to us from communion with the Church; he has no longer the right to receive any sacraments, he has no share in the good works and merits of the just, is deprived of the public intercessions, can gain no indulgence, and if he dies whilst excommunicated, he is deprived of Christian burial, for such a one is looked upon as a heathen, according to the word of Christ: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." That the excommunicated, unless they do penance and reconcile themsemselves with the Church, can have no hope of salvation, is evident. The great crime which they have committed, their impenitence and obstinacy, must necessarily shut them out from heaven.

PERORATION.

From what has been said you understand that the state of those who are separated from the Church is a deplorable one, and that many of them, if not most of them, will lose their eternal salvation. Though it is true that God will condemn no one unless it be through his own fault, we can by no means admit that a great number of unbelievers and heretics will be saved, for there will be only a few among them who abstain from grievous sins and have a sincere and serious desire for the truth. Be this as it may, we do not presume to judge any one, but we are bound to say that the Catholic Church is the only saving Church, and that one must belong to her at least interiorly, that is, to her soul, in order to be saved. Concerning ourselves, let us endeavor conscientiously to fulfil our duties as Catholics so that the Catholic Church may lead us to holiness and to heaven. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE MEANING OF THE FIVE SUNDAYS AFTER EASTER.

I am the good shepherd.—John 10: 11.

The celebration of Easter is prolonged for a considerable time; it extends, strictly speaking, to the feast of the Ascension of Christ, but in a wider acceptation, to Pentecost. This celebration is nothing but a continual echo of Easter joy. The Church rejoices at the triumph of her risen Founder and Bridegroom and at the accomplishment of the work of our Redemption. She manifests this Easter joy by the use of white vestments during the whole of Paschal time, and by the Alleluia which is constantly repeated in the Mass and in the Divine Office. The Sundays from Easter till the Ascension all point to Christ and his Church and show us what Christ is to his Church and what the Church is to us. We will endeavor to-day to understand the significance of these Sundays, for which purpose I shall answer the two following questions: What is the meaning—

I. Of the first two Sundays, and
II. Of the last three Sundays after Easter.

PART I.

1. On the first Sunday after Easter (Low Sunday) the Church shows us Jesus Christ, the risen Saviour, as *her head.*

(*a.*) In the epistle of this Sunday he appears as the Son of God. We read in it: "Who is it that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" At the same time St. John gives testimony of Christ as our *Saviour and Redeemer* in these words: "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood;" that is to say: Christ has proved by facts that he is our Redeemer, for he has instituted baptism, by which we are cleansed from all sins, regenerated and sanctified, and he has shed his precious blood on the cross, by which he reconciled us with God.

The gospel shows Christ as the *Prince of Peace*, for it tells us that the risen Saviour appeared to his disciples, the doors being shut, and saluted them with the words: "Peace be to you." Moreover, the gospel indicates in what sense Christ is the Prince of Peace, telling us that he gave his Apostles the power of forgiving and retaining sins. By this power of the forgiveness of sin he is always the Prince of Peace; for our sins being forgiven, we are reconciled with God and have peace with him.

(*b.*) Christ is therefore the head of his Church in a triple relation: namely, as *God*, as *the Redeemer*, and as *the Prince of Peace.* If he, the head of the Church, is the Son of God, we owe him divine honor or *adoration.* Christ himself demands this honor of us, saying that all men must honor the Son, as they honor the Father (*John* 5: 23), and the Apostle writes: "God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."—*Phil.* 2: 9-11. Give the divine Saviour the honor and adoration due to him, interiorly and exteriorly; interiorly, by a living faith in his Divinity, by a profound reverence, gratitude and love; exteriorly, by genuflexions, folding the hands at prayer, by a respectful deportment in church and frequent participation in the public worship of God.

If Christ, the head of the Church, is *our Redeemer*, we owe him thanks. Should we not be thankful to him for having given his blood and life for our Redemption? Call to mind frequently the ineffable grace of your Redemption, and thank him for it from

the bottom of your heart, especially whilst present at the sacrifice of the mass, in which the bloody sacrifice on the cross is renewed on the altar in an unbloody manner.

If Christ, the head of the Church, is the Prince of Peace, we must carefully keep the peace which he has brought. Keep peace with God by doing his holy will, keep peace with yourselves by preserving your conscience free from every sin, keep peace with your fellow-men by having patience with their frailties and bearing injuries and offenses without complaint.

2. On the second Sunday after Easter the Church shows us Christ as the *good shepherd.*

(*a.*) In the epistle Christ is spoken of as the good shepherd, for it says: "You were as sheep going astray, but you are now converted to (Jesus Christ) the shepherd and bishop of your souls." In the gospel he calls himself the good shepherd, and says that he knows his sheep and gives his life for them, and that he has other sheep, that are not of his fold, but that he would also bring them into it. *He knows his sheep,* that is, his disciples, not only exteriorly, but also interiorly, and employs this knowledge for their good by giving them those graces which are most suitable and necessary for them. *Jesus gives his life for his sheep.* He has done so on Calvary, where he died on the cross for our Redemption. His bloody sacrifice on the cross he daily renews on thousands of altars to the end of time, in an unbloody manner in holy mass, in order to apply to men the fruits of Redemption; thus he continues to be the good shepherd who offers himself for us. *Jesus brings also the sheep that are not of his fold, that is, the Gentiles.* His solicitude and love are all-embracing; not only the Jews but also the Gentiles are to be received into his Church and to be saved. Therefore he gave his Apostles and their successors the commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and promised them his continual assistance, in these words: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." —*Matt.* 28: 19, 20.

(*b.*) If he is our good shepherd, what is more becoming for us than to be good sheep? But as good sheep we must know him, that is, we must believe in him and all the sacred truths which the Catholic Church proposes to our belief; we must hear his voice, that is, do what he commands us. But as Christ, the good shepherd, is no longer visible among us, we must recognize him in the person of the bishops and priests who hold his place as our shepherd, and obey them. Consider the words of Christ, which he spoke to his Apostles and their successors: "He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me,

and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."—*Luke* 10: 16. Be not led astray by those who revile and calumniate priests and encourage disobedience to them; as they are, "Ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (*I. Cor.* 4: 1), regard them as such and receive with a docile and believing heart that which they preach to you, regulating your life according to the principles of the gospel.

PART II.

1. On the third Sunday after Easter the sufferings, the struggles, and the victories of the Church are brought before us.

(*a.*) In the gospel of this Sunday Christ says: "Amen, Amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." These prophecies of our Lord we find fulfilled in the history of the Church for the last eighteen hundred years. The Church frequently experienced distressing times, but they passed away and were changed into seasons of joy and triumph. In the very beginning the Church was obliged to endure a long and terrible persecution. The Christians were stripped of their property, of honors and dignities, they were exiled, cast into dungeons, and tortured to death in a thousand different ways. This persecution extended all over the Roman Empire, and lasted, with little interruption, for three hundred years. Millions of Christians of all classes, of all ages and of both sexes, died as martyrs. Yet, after three hundred years, when the Church obtained peace, she came forth victorious from the contest and her sorrow was turned into joy. The Church has had a similar experience in almost every century; sufferings and persecutions were ever in store for her, now from enemies within, now from enemies without, but these sufferings and persecutions spent themselves, and after the storm there came a great calm, and the Church enjoyed again the blessings of peace.

(*b.*) The history of each individual Christian is a repetition of the history of the Church. Every one, especially every pious Christian, experiences sufferings and tribulations in his earthly life, for "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—*II. Tim.* 3: 12. God frequently subjects the just to hard trials; the devil too prepares great persecutions for them, and the world persecutes them. But the words of Christ apply to them also: "You shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Let us therefore not lose courage when we are visited with sufferings and tribulations, but have patience and cheerfulness of soul, comforting ourselves with the words of the

Apostle: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4: 17.

2. The fourth Sunday after Easter shows us the activity of the Church in the purification and sanctification of men.

(*a.*) In the gospel of this Sunday our Lord says to the Apostles: "When he (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment." The meaning of this is: "The Holy Ghost, whom I will send you, will convince the Jews and the Gentiles that they have grievously sinned because they did not believe in me; he will convince them that I am just and that all who receive my doctrine and obey it will be led to justice; finally, he will convince them of the judgment which shall be passed on the devil; for his kingdom, the kingdom of error and sin, shall be destroyed." The Holy Ghost has procured these effects through the Church and still produces them. The Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, convinced the world by the gospel which she preached, by the miracles which she wrought, and by the holiness of all those who obeyed her doctrine, that Christ was truly the Son of God and the promised Redeemer, and that all who will be saved must believe in him. By the propagation of the Church judgment was also passed on Satan, for idolatry, with all its abominations, disappeared more and more from the earth.

(*b.*) Let us rejoice that the Holy Ghost has done and still does such great things through the Catholic Church, and let us convince the world of sin, of justice and judgment; of the sin of unbelief, by firmly adhering to the holy Catholic Church; of the justice of Jesus, by zeal for his honor and by a truly Christian life, of judgment, by renouncing the devil and all his works, pomps and pride, and by keeping the commandments of God.

3. The fifth Sunday after Easter teaches us what a happiness it is to belong to the Catholic Church.

(*a.*) This happiness consists chiefly in this, that the Catholic Church infallibly teaches us what God has revealed for our salvation. Jesus indicates this in the gospel of this day, with the words: "Hitherto I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father." The Catholic Church, enlightened and governed by the Holy Ghost, teaches us with absolute and infallible certainty all that we must believe, hope for, and do; for while all who do not belong to the Catholic Church have only

fragments of the divine revelation, and, moreover, are always in uncertainty as to whether their faith is the true one or not, and whether the way they follow will lead them to salvation, we have absolute certainty that we are in the possession of the whole truth and shall be saved, provided we live according to the doctrine and precepts of the Church.

(*b.*) Moreover, we enjoy the special love of God, our heavenly Father. Christ gives us to understand this in the words: "I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." As God loved the Apostles, so he loves us, if, like them, we love Jesus, adhere to him with a believing heart and serve him faithfully.

(*c.*) Lastly, our happiness consists in this, that we are all-powerful with God and obtain of him whatever we shall ask of him in the name of his Son: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you." We are most intimately connected with Jesus, for we are members of his body, the Church. Hence there is no doubt that he will exert before the throne of his Heavenly Father all his influence in our behalf and obtain for us all the graces we stand in need of. And if it should happen that sometimes we do not obtain what we ask of the Father in the name of Jesus, nevertheless, we cannot say that our prayer is not heard; for God knows what is expedient and necessary for us, and gives us something better.

PERORATION.

These five Sundays after Easter reveal to us the wonderful grace which God has given us by making us members of the holy Catholic Church. Let us thank him for it and renew our resolution always to be obedient children of the Catholic Church. Let us believe what she teaches, do what she commands, and diligently employ the means of salvation which she dispenses. Let us fight as members of the Church militant with courage and confidence in God against all the enemies of our soul; but as we are weak and can do little of ourselves, let us have recourse to God, and pray without fainting, in the name of Jesus, that we may fight the good fight and obtain the crown of life. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE QUALITIES OF THE SHEEP OF CHRIST.

I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine ***know me.***— *John* 10: 14.

Christ calls himself the good shepherd, and so he is; he has his sheep always before his eyes, and watches over them with anxious love in order to keep them together and to shield them from whatever might injure them. And if one of them strays away, he goes after it and does not give up the search till he finds it, and having found it, he lays it upon his shoulders and carries it back to the fold; he is all goodness and mercy towards sinners and gives them grace upon grace, in order to reclaim them from their evil ways and to rescue them from perdition. He leads his sheep to the best pasturage; for he nourishes our souls with his divine word and even with his own flesh and blood. His love for his sheep goes so far as to give even his life for them; for, to redeem and save us, he died on the cross. Now, if Jesus is so good a shepherd, nothing is more reasonable than that we should endeavor to be a good sheep. But to be good sheep of his, we must take the sheep for our pattern and imitate, in a moral sense, the good qualities which that animal has. To do this let us consider the principal qualities of the sheep and apply them to ourselves in a spiritual sense, that we may know what marks we should have. These qualities or marks are:

1. *Meekness. The meekness of sheep* is proverbial. This innocent animal is weak and inoffensive and uses no weapons for its defense, it does not butt, kick, bite, wound or poison. It is said that the lamb one day complained to its Maker that it alone among all animals on earth had received no weapon for its defense. The Creator said: "I have given thee meekness; this will protect and defend thee." Meekness is therefore one of the first distinctive marks by which the elect of God are known. Does not our Lord beseechingly entreat us to learn meekness of him? He promises the kingdom of heaven to those who do not cherish ill-will against their neighbor, who, when reviled, revile not; he calls the meek, children of God, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." Therefore, if you are angry with others, if you bear resentment, if you hate and persecute

those who offend you, if you think of revenge, return injury for injury, give full scope to your anger and pursue your enemy with curses, imprecations and uncharitable expressions, you are found wanting in that quality which characterizes the true sheep of Christ and the elect of God.

2. *Patience.* The silent patience of the sheep is also well known; it is dumb under the shearer's hands; it neither complains nor bleats when led to the slaughter. In like manner the heirs of the kingdom of heaven are know by their patience under trials and sufferings. I should fatigue you were I to produce all the passages of Scripture from which it is evident that the patient endurance of trials and hardships is the characteristic mark of the just and pious, who thereby prepare for themselves endless joys in the world to come. Here mourning, there joy; here poverty, there riches; here contempt, and there glory. These go hand in hand, but only on condition that this mourning, poverty and contempt are borne with patience to the end. "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Persevere under discipline. God dealeth with you as with his sons; for what son is there whom the father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons."—*Heb.* 12: 6, 7, 8. But that no one may think that mere suffering is able to make us children of God and heirs of heaven, our Saviour, having called the persecuted, the oppressed and the poor, "blessed," uttered on another occasion these memorable words: "In your patience you shall possess your souls" (*Luke* 21: 19.), for the wicked and ungodly also suffer, but being impatient under their sufferings, murmuring and complaining at the dispensations of Providence, they lose the reward of their sufferings and prove that they do not belong to the true sheep of Christ and the elect of God. "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience; and patience hath a perfect work."—*James* 1: 2—4.

3. *The sheep is not proud,* but humble in its appearance. Humility is a sign of the true sheep of Christ and the elect of God. The poor in spirit, the humble, are the first among those whom the Lord called "blessed" and to whom he promised the kingdom of heaven: "He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." —*Matt.* 23: 12. As humility is a sign of election, so pride is a mark of reprobation. Pride is the parent of many sins and the chief of vices, which cause the death of the soul "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—*James* 4: 6. "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning."—*Tob.* 4: 14. If therefore you will

know with certainty your place in the other world, and whether you are of the number of the elect, look into your own heart and see whether you are humble, not only in spirit and understanding, but also in heart and will, or whether you are full of pride, ambition or self-love, whether you think yourselves better than others, whether you do not despise others. By a careful examination of yourselves you will very probably find, to your utter dismay, a mountain of pride that must be brought low, before you can put on the semblance of a sheep and true follower of Christ.

4. *Sheep are lovers of salt,* and the frequent use of it preserves them from various diseases. Those who are of the number of the elect have a longing desire after the spiritual salt, that is, the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, which preserve them from the diseases of the soul. As the shipwrecked mariner clings to life, and with eagerness catches at the friendly plank and grasps it with all his might, so the elect, solicitous for salvation, eagerly seize the plank of penance. The Sacrament of Penance being the second saving plank after shipwreck, he who does not take hold of it is doomed to perish in the deluge of sin. With the same eagerness the elect long for the Bread of Life, which stills their hunger and strengthens them on the journey to heaven, and by their hunger and thirst after this heavenly Manna they are known to be of the number of the elect. For "he that eateth me," says Christ, "shall live by me; he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, shall live for ever." It is a bad sign when a Catholic feels no desire for the sacraments; if from one Easter to another he can exist without eating the Bread of Life. As the dead have no desire for food, so it is a sign of spiritual death when a Christian does not long for this spiritual and heavenly food.

5. *The sheep know the voice of the shepherd;* out of a hundred voices they recognize his and gladly follow it. So also the true sheep of Christ are known by their eagerness to hear the word of God. They love to go to Church, where the word of God is preached, they take to heart what they hear, apply it to themselves and put it into practice. Christ made this a particular sign whereby his sheep can be known from those that are not of his fold: "My sheep hear my voice; and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand."—*John* 10: 27. Again he says: "He that is of God, heareth the words of God" (*John* 8: 47), and he upbraids the Jews with their incredulity, telling them that they are not of God, because they will not hear him; but of the devil, who is a liar from the begin-

ning, and the father of lies. According to these words the elect are easily discerned from the reprobate. They who love to hear the word of God and keep it are of God; others are not. Let lukewarm Christians who despise the word of God and disregard the obligation to hear it, judge themselves by this divine standard: "He that is of God, heareth the word of God."—*John* 8: 47.

6. *Sheep fly from the wolf;* they fear the wolf and all beasts of prey and take to flight at the least appearance of danger. The true sheep of Christ are also known by their holy dread of falling into sin, nay, they fly even at "the appearance of evil," according to the counsel of St. Paul. "Blessed is the man that is always fearful."—*Prov.* 28: 14. We have all reason to be fearful, for we are weak and frail, and great are the dangers to salvation, which encompass us on all sides. David, the man according to the heart of God, becomes a murderer and adulterer, Solomon, the wisest of kings, an idolator; Judas, the apostle, a traitor and suicide. "He that standeth, let him take heed lest he fall." And how great are the dangers to salvation! The devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The flesh, that domestic foe, is always watching to betray us into his hands, and the world studies to impose upon us by false maxims, and to decoy us by stratagem into its snares. Must we not with fear and trembling work out our salvation?—*Phil.* 2 : 12.

7. Lastly, *sheep are profitable to their shepherd;* they feed him with their flesh and clothe him with their wool, and, to use the beautiful language of St. Martin, they fulfil the precept of the gospel: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none."—*Luke* 3 : 11. In like manner the sheep of the good shepherd are known by charitable works to their fellow-men, they feed the hungry, clothe the naked and by these works make sure their calling and election. Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor and open not their hands in works of mercy, bear no resemblance to the sheep of the one fold.

PERORATION.

When you made your Easter confession you examined your heart and conscience. Have you found in your conduct these signs of election? Are your lives distinguished by meekness, patience and humility? Do you discover in yourselves a relish for the Bread of Life and the word of God? Do you love to hear his word? Do you hate sin and shun the occasions that lead to it? Do you freely give of your substance to feed the poor and to adorn the house of God? Woe to you if you find yourselves wanting in these virtues, for then, although you are in the fold of

Christ, and in the bosom of the Church, you are not true sheep of the good shepherd, nor of the number of the elect. But blessed are they who have these signs and preserve them to the end, for they have the well-founded hope of hearing one day the voice of the Saviour saying to them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—*Matt.* 25: 34. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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6. MORAL SKETCH.

WE MUST BE GOOD SHEPHERDS OF OUR SOULS.

I am the good shepherd.—John 10: 11.

Jesus is the good shepherd. He knows his sheep, he loves them with fatherly affection and provides for all their wants. He feeds them, giving them continually through the holy Catholic Church the bread of his divine word and even his own flesh and blood in holy communion for the nourishment of their souls. But his love goes still further, he offers his life for his sheep, dying for them on the cross. We also must be good shepherds, and every one of us should be able to say: "I am a good shepherd." We all have a sheep, our soul. Christ has appointed us pastors of this sheep and imposed upon us the strict obligation to take care of it. Let us then make the resolution according to the example of Christ to be good shepherds, who—

I. Know their soul;
II. Feed it;
III. Are ready to offer their life for it.

Part I.

Our first duty is to known our soul, that is, to know *what our soul is.*

1. Our soul is *the image of God.*

(*a.*) *A natural image.* Whatever God is, our soul is, only with the difference that God possesses everything good in an infinite measure, whilst our soul, being a created being, is good only in a limited manner. God is eternal without a beginning and an end; our soul had a beginning, but will have no end; it is immortal. God is almighty, our soul also is endowed with great power, for it governs the earth with all its creatures and accomplishes works that excite astonishment. God is omniscient; our soul also has a wonderful capacity for knowledge, searching heaven and earth. It penetrates the depth of science, the secrets of nature and the mysteries of God. God is omnipresent, our soul also in its flight soars through the immeasurable spheres of Creation, is in heaven among the angels and saints, and in a moment again upon earth among men.

(*b.*) *A supernatural image.* When the soul is adorned with the grace of God it is just and holy, like unto God. In comparison with these supernatural qualities of the soul its natural gifts and prerogatives are as insignificant as a grain of sand compared with the universe. By sanctifying grace our soul is raised above human nature, and participates in the divine nature. Great is the dignity of kings and emperors, but, compared with the dignity of a sanctified soul, it is nothing but dust, because it is only earthly and natural, whilst the dignity of a sanctified soul is supernatural and heavenly.

2. The soul, as a natural and supernatural image of God, being so glorious, it follows that we must prize it highly and be solicitous for its salvation.

(*a.*) We are very solicitous for our body: we feed and clothe it very carefully. What is our body? It is true it is a creature of God, but it will soon return into dust: its fate after the resurrection is intimately connected with that of the soul. If the soul is admitted into heaven, the body will go there to; but if the soul is lost, the body also will share that unhappy lot. We read of Esau, that he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and of a king, who being tormented with thirst gave his whole kingdom for a draught of water. How foolish! But do not we Christians act more foolishly when we exchange our souls for a trifle, for the gratification of a passion, and sell her to the devil?

(*b.*) Oh, value your soul and keep it as the apple of your eye, that you may not lose it. Watch and pray, for there are many perils for your soul. Guard your senses, especially your eyes, and turn them away from everything that might enkindle in your heart the fire of sinful desires and passions. Resist the tempta-

tion in the very beginning with determination, shun those persons, societies, and entertainments that are for you a proximate occasion to sin, considering that he who loves danger shall perish in it. Value your soul more highly than all earthly goods, and be always resolved to make any and every sacrifice for its salvation.

Part II.

As good shepherds we must pasture our soul, that is, we must furnish it with whatever is necessary for the preservation of its supernatural life. We must *feed our soul*—

1. *With the word of God.* The word of God enlightens us, that we may know what is good and pleasing to God, and what we must do and what we must avoid; it strengthens us to overcome all obstacles in the way of salvation and to serve God faithfully; it comforts us in tribulations and raises our thoughts to heavenly things, so that we despise earthly things and seek that which is above. Hence David calls the word of God a lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths.—*Ps.* 118: 105. And St. Paul writes: "The word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword."—*Heb.* 4: 12. St. Jerome says: "The preaching of the word of God is a plough, which loosens the soil of the soul, roots up the thorns of vices, and softens the hardness of the heart." Examples of the efficacy of the word of God; at the first sermon of St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost three thousand Jews were converted and baptized; the Apostles and their successors destroyed Paganism with all its abominations by the preaching of the word of God, propagated everywhere the Christian religion, and renewed the face of the earth. If the word of God were no longer preached, the evil consequences would be ignorance of religion, prevalence of all sins and vices, apostasy from the faith, the ruin of kingdoms and nations. Listen with pleasure to the word of God, and make it the rule of your life.

2. *With holy communion*, for this is the best and most nutritious nourishment of the soul. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath life everlasting; and I will raise him up in the last day."—*John* 6: 55. Who could enumerate all the graces that are connected with a worthy communion? It is holy communion that increases sanctifiying grace, weakens the evil inclinations and motions within us and fortifies us with supernatural strength to overcome all, even the most violent, temptations, and unites us most intimately with Jesus, so that we can say with the Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Gal.* 2: 20.

In regard to these graces, all pious Christians have always deemed themselves happy to be able to go frequently to communion. The primitive Christians used to receive it at every mass they attended, that is, daily, or, at least, every Sunday; they were even permitted to take the Blessed Sacrament home with them, that they might communicate themselves when they were prevented from coming to the assembly of the faithful. St. Charles Borromeo urges all priests to encourage the faithful to the frequent reception of the sacraments, and the Council of Trent wishes the faithful to communicate at every mass, not only spiritually, but also sacramentally.

Be not then hirelings, who let their sheep hunger and languish, but be good shepherds and feed your soul, go to communion as often as your pastor or your confessor advises or considers it expedient for you, in order to enable you to preserve yourselves in the life of grace and to make progress on the way of perfection.

PART III.

As good shepherds, we must, if necessary, ***lay down our life*** for the salvation of our soul.

1. *Reason* requires this of us, for reason tells us that things of greater value must be esteemed more highly than those which are less valuable. Every rational man judges and acts according to this principle. Thus a pound of gold is valued more highly than a pound of iron or lead. Again, reason tells us that between two equally unavoidable evils we must choose the less. All act according to this principle. One allows an arm or a leg to be amputated in order to save one's life. Now the question is which is the most precious of all our goods? Certainly our soul. It is worth more than house or home, more than the whole world with all its treasures; it is, in a certain sense, worth as much as the precious blood which Jesus Christ shed for us. And what evil is there in the world that could equal the loss of the soul? The greatest of all temporal evils is undoubtedly death, but death destroys only the temporal life, and is, if it be a good death, a bridge to a happy life in heaven. But what is it compared with the loss of the soul? With the loss of the soul all is lost, earthly goods, the body, heaven; and eternal damnation is connected with this loss. The loss of the soul then is evidently the greatest, and, properly speaking, the only evil. Does not reason require that we should rather die than suffer the loss of our soul?

2. *The word of God requires it.* Christ emphatically says: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell."—*Matt.* 10: 28. From this it follows that we must not hesitate to sacrifice our life, if we could not save our soul in any other way. For this reason the holy martyrs endured the greatest tortures, and gave their lives, because they knew that only in such a way they could save their souls. Conscientious Christians have acted at all times according to this principle. Whenever they were placed in circumstances in which they could not avoid doing something contrary to the will of God and jeopardizing the salvation of their soul, they resisted with all their will and said: "God is to be obeyed before man."—*B. Thomas More.* Examine yourselves carefully and see whether the salvation of your soul is everything to you, whether you are resolved to sacrifice house and home, property, honor and reputation, blood and life, rather than lose your soul. This must be your disposition, and thus you must act, if you wish to save your soul; your reason and the word of God require this of you.

PERORATION.

Let us be good shepherds of our soul. Our soul is the most precious treasure we possess, for it is created in the image of God and destined to enjoy eternal life in heaven. Our soul is our only good; if we save it, all is gained, if we lose it, all is lost. There is no evil that can equal the loss of the soul, and no good that could compensate for that loss. Therefore Jesus cries out to us earnestly: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?"—*Matt.* 16: 26. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SIGNS OF ELECTION.

I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me.—*John* 10: 14.

Jesus, the good shepherd, knows his sheep. By virtue of his omniscience with which he searches the heart and the reins and sees all that the future conceals in its bosom, he knows who they are that belong to his sheep and who on the Day of Judgment will stand at his right side and enter into life. It is otherwise with us, for we do not know with *absolute certainty* whether we are at present of the number of his sheep or not, or whether we shall hereafter enter into heaven with the sheep of Christ or not; or, in other words, whether we possess the grace of God and shall be saved or not. "Man knoweth not (without a special revelation of God) whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."—*Eccltes.* 9: 1. There are, however, certain signs by means of which we may conclude with *moral certainty* whether we shall be saved or not. Of these signs of election I shall speak to you to-day. There are—

I. Morally certain signs of election;
II. Less certain signs of election.

PART I.

Among the morally certain signs of election I reckon—

1. *The careful shunning of every sin.*

(*a.*) It is sin alone that excludes from the kingdom of heaven. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."—*Gal.* 6: 8. He who departs this life contaminated with mortal sins goes to hell; he who at his death has still venial sins must do penance in purgatory till he is perfectly cleansed. Divine revelation teaches us this. Those who go before the tribunal of God, free from every sin, are immediately translated into heaven. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? or who shall rest in thy holy hill? He that walketh without blemish, and worketh

justice."—*Ps.* 14: 1, 2. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."—*Matt.* 5: 8.

(*b.*) We find this sign of election in all the saints. Sin was to them the greatest evil, and they preferred to lose everything, even life itself, rather than by mortal sin to lose the grace of God. The holy martyrs, who, in order to preserve themselves from sin, sacrificed their lives under the most cruel torments, all attest this. Even small faults, imperfections and venial sins they detested above all things. Blessed are you if these are your sentiments! If you fear and shun sin above all things, and always keep a pure conscience, you have in you a certain sign of future election, for "if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God."—*I. John* 3: 21. But woe to you if you sin heedlessly, and are not disquieted on account of your sins, or if you impenitently persevere in the state of sin. That would be a sign of reprobation.

2. *Humility.*

(*a.*) This is evident from the words of Christ: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 3. The poor in spirit are especially the humble. The disciples once asked our Lord who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, calling unto him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 18; 1-3. Here again our Lord emphatically declares that pride shuts heaven, and that humility opens it. St. Paul writes: "Whom he (the Lord) foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son."—*Rom.* 8: 29. Now we become conformable to our divine Saviour only by true humility since during his earthly life he humbled himself must profoundly. Therefore he said: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—*Matt.* 11: 29. He who is truly humble is conformable to Jesus, and can hope with certainty for salvation.

(*b.*) In order to be saved we need the grace of God, for without it we can neither avoid sin, nor perform any meritorious work, nor persevere in justice to the end. But when will God give us this grace so necessary for salvation? Only when we are humble of heart. You know what St. Peter says: "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace.—*I. Pet.* 5: 5. He who nourishes pride in his heart may pray, but no matter where and how he may pray God will never hear him. (*Example: The proud Pharisee.*) But he who truly humbles himself will be heard.

(*The humble Publican.*) If we constantly walk in the way of humility, God will give us in every situation of life all graces necessary for our salvation, and so we may hope to make a happy end and enter into life everlasting.

(*c.*) This hope is so much the better grounded, as it is particularly humility that renders all temptations of Satan futile and frustrates all his attacks. All the powers of hell rose against Job to ruin him, but by humility he conquered. Humility is, as it were, a shield, in which the fiery darts of Satan stick. St. Anthony once, in a vision, saw the world covered with snares which the devil had laid for men. The Saint sighing deeply said: "Lord, who shall escape?" And he received the answer: "Only the humble." The devil may employ all his power and cunning to make us fall, but if we are truly humble he cannot injure us in the least. If there is a Christian who may surely hope to belong to the elect, it is the humble man. What an encouragement for us to be humble.

3. *Liberality in almsgiving.*

(*a.*) The particular pleasure with which God regards this virtue is frequently referred to in Sacred Scripture. "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold; for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy, and life everlasting."—*Tob.* 12: 8, 9. He that hath given bread to the hungry and hath covered the naked with a garment . . . shall surely live, saith the Lord God."—*Ezech.* 18: 7, 9. "Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness."—*Tob.* 4: 11. What a well-grounded hope of salvation charitable and merciful Christians have, is evident from the sentence of the divine Judge: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat," etc.—*Matt.* 25: 34. The reason is because he who gives to the needy makes God Himself his debtor, according to *Matt.* 25: 40: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to me."

(*b.*) God, being himself all love and mercy, has a particular pleasure in merciful men and showers his graces upon them abundantly. He enlightens them that they may know what is right and good, he strengthens their will, that they may do what they know to be right; he prolongs for them the time of grace, and places them in circumstances in which they can easily work out their salvation. (*Example*: *the Centurion Cornelius.*) One day an

angel appeared to him, and commanded him to send men to Joppe and inquire for a certain Simon Peter, who would tell him what he should do to obtain salvation. The next day Simon Peter had a vision in which God commanded him to receive Cornelius into the bosom of the Church. Thus Cornelius was converted to the Christian faith by a double miracle. To what did he owe this extraordinary grace? To prayer and especially to the works of mercy, which he practiced so zealously that the angel who had appeared to him expressly said: "Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God."—*Acts.* 10: 4. Although we be entangled in the bonds of error and sin, we need not despair of our salvation; if we are merciful to the needy, God will give us great and perhaps extraordinary graces, that we may attain true knowledge, do penance and save our soul. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt.* 5: 7. Hence St. Jerome says: "I have never yet heard that any one who was solicitous to do works of mercy died a bad death; for such a one has so many intercessors with God, that it is almost impossible for Him not to hear their prayers."

Part II.

Less certain signs of election are—

1. *The diligent hearing of the word of God.*

(*a.*) Jesus says of his sheep, that they hear his voice. We hear the voice of Jesus, our good shepherd, as often as we hear the sermons or instructions of our pastor, for they announce to us the word of God in his name and by his authority. Jesus again says; "He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God."—*John* 8: 47. Whilst according to these words the diligent hearers of the word of God manifest themselves as children of God and are entitled to the hope of salvation, those who despise it are children of Satan and give reason to fear that they will be rejected.

(*b.*) He who loves to hear the word of God shows a good Christian heart, for he whose heart is perverse, will hear nothing of the word of God. But he who is docile and well disposed and has the intention of living according to the precepts of the divine law, will, we may confidently hope and predict, find his place in heaven. Though he may have many faults, though he may unfortunately fall again and again into grievous sins, yet by a diligent hearing of the word of God he will finally be moved to rise from his fall and permanently amend his life; for since the word

of God continually holds our duties before our eyes, inculcates them upon us, and describes to us the baseness and culpability of sin and the loveliness and great reward of virtue, it can not fail to make a salutary impression upon us and effect a change of mind and an amendment of life. Witness the hotheaded and youthful Augustine, who, by attentively listening to the sermons of St. Ambrose, was brought to the knowledge of his errors and converted, becoming one of the greatest pillars of the Church, and who, at one time, being almost the only champion of truth in the whole world, made the heretics and schismatics quail, thanks to productions of his mighty pen.

(*c.*) Moreover, it is a sure sign that one loves God if one loves to hear the word of God. It is a characteristic deeply planted in the nature of man that he likes to speak of those whom he loves, and to hear them well spoken of; that, on the contrary, he will hear nothing about those to whom he is averse. Hence we see that men who have fallen away from their religion and lead unchristian lives are disgusted with the word of God, as the Israelites were with the manna, and therefore seldom come to hear a sermon. As the neglect of the word of God is a bad sign, so the diligent hearing of it is a good sign, and St. Augustine does not hesitate to say: "There is no better sign of election than to love to hear the word of God." Of course, we must not content himself with the mere hearing, but we must endeavor to regulate our life accordingly, for "blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."—*Luke* 11: 28.

2. *The frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Blessed Eucharist.*

(*a.*) The holy Sacrament of Penance has two effects of grace; it cleanses from sin, and preserves from sin. It cleanses from sin, for to him who worthily receives it, all his sins, even the most grievous, are forgiven. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." It preserves from sin, for it imparts a particular grace, by which we are enabled to overcome temptations and to persevere in the state of grace. The oftener we confess penitently, the purer our conscience becomes from all stains of sin, and the more graces we receive for perseverance in virtue. Hence we see that those us who frequently confess do not generally commit mortal sins, whilst this is not the case with those who confess seldom, perhaps scarcely once a year. Now, since those only who are clean of heart shall see God, it is evident that frequent confession, provided it be well made, is a sign of election.

(*b*) This is much the more true of holy communion. Our Lord emphatically says: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My

blood, hath everlasting life."—*John* 6: 55. As the Sacrament of the Altar is the holiest of all the sacraments of the New Law, so it is also the greatest, because in it we receive not only graces, but the Author and Dispenser of all graces, Jesus Christ Himself with his Divinity and humanity. This sacrament weakening our concupiscence, increasing our fervor for virtue, and strengthening us for good works, is evidently the best and most effectual means for the preservation of sanctifying grace, the perfection of our life, and consequently for the obtaining of life everlasting. It can therefore be truly said, that those who frequently, worthily and devoutly approach the altar have a well-grounded hope of salvation. Who of us do not wish to go to heaven? Let us go frequently and well prepared to confession and communion, and our wish will be fulfilled.

3. *Fervor in prayer and particularly devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

(*a.*) *Prayer is the key to the heart of God,* all graces and good gifts are the fruit of prayer. "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you."—*John* 16: 23. As often as we pray with devotion, we collect our mind and withdraw it from the cares of the world; we raise ourselves to God and converse with Him; pious sentiments and good resolutions are awakened in our soul. Thus prayer ennobles the heart of man, sanctifies his thoughts and desires, and this interior dignity manifests itself also by a virtuous life. Hence we see that Christians who are fond of prayer—who pray not only with the lips, but in spirit and in truth, distinguish themselves by the purity of their morals and the probity of their lives. Fervor in prayer, therefore, is not an insignificant sign of election.

(*b.*) The same may be said of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Being the holiest of all creatures, she is most acceptable to God, and therefore more powerful with Him through her intercession than all the angels and saints. As the holiest creature, Mary loves God and man the most, because holiness consists in the love of God and of our neighbor; but if Mary loves men the most, she is also the most solicitous for their salvation, and therefore employs her great power and influence with God to assist us in working out our salvation. Moreover, Mary is the Mother of God. What does not a good son do for his mother? And what will not Jesus Christ do to please his Blessed Mother? Can it be thought that he would refuse her a single request? As Mary has the power and the will to obtain of God all graces for us, may we not hope that if we devoutly venerate her we shall be saved? St. Augustine addresses her in these words: "Thou art (after

Christ) the only hope of sinners; through thee we expect the forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation." St. Bonaventure: "As every one, O Blessed Virgin, who turns away from thee and is despised by thee, must necessarily perish, so it is impossible that he shall perish who turns to thee and whom thou regardest." "O sinner," says St. Alphonsus, "if we find ourselves guilty before the divine justice, and if we are condemned to hell on account of our transgressions, let us not despair, let us have recourse to the divine Mother, she will save us." He who devoutly venerates the Blessed Virgin, and leads a pious, penitential life, may firmly hope that he will be saved.

PERORATION.

You know now the principal signs of election. If you detest and shun every sin as the greatest evil, walk in humility and are liberal in alms towards the needy and assist them whenever you can, you may live in the hope of finding grace with God and being saved. You are also entitled to this hope if you love to hear the word of God and if you hear it with a heart solicitous for salvation; go frequently and well prepared to confession and communion; pray fervently and devoutly and have particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin. God grant that you may acquire all these signs of election and safely attain heaven. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Epistle. *I. Peter* 2, 11-19. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by the good works which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling: or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God; honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king: servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, for this is thanks-worthy in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ON THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE.

The lesson for to-day, like that for last Sunday, is taken from the first epistle of St. Peter. As you know, on last Sunday he brought Christ before us as our model in sufferings. Jesus suffered *innocently*, *meekly* and *voluntarily*. *Innocently*, for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" *meekly*, for "when he was reviled, he did not revile; and when he suffered, he threatened not," *voluntarily*, for "he delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly." Now, "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps." If you are persecuted unjustly, look up to Jesus and comfort yourselves with his words: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 10. In all

tribulations and persecutions let us preserve meekness; remember that you are Christians, and as such you are bound to do good to them that hate you, and to pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.—*Matt.* 5: 44. Suffer with patience, "for patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise."—*Heb.* 10: 36. Let us now turn to the lesson of this day, which tells us how we should conduct ourselves—

I. Towards the world;
II. Towards the temporal power;
III. As servants towards their masters.

PART I.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul; having your conversation good among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by the good works, which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1. The prince of the Apostle desires above all things that we should consider ourselves here below as strangers and pilgrims. The earth upon which we live is not the place of our destination, but only a temporary abode, which we must soon leave; we are only transient dwellers here, heaven is our home. Hence St. Paul says: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."—*Heb.* 13: 14. We must therefore conduct ourselves towards the world, as a stranger who is abroad and on his way home.

(*a.*) Such a stranger stops nowhere long, attaches himself to nothing that he sees on his journey; his heart and affections are constantly turned towards his dear home. So also the Christians has no inordinate love for anything earthly, because he knows that all is vanity and passes away like a shadow; to serve God and to be saved is what occupies him continually. He obeys the words of the Apostle: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth."

(*b.*) A stranger and traveler does not encumber himself with unnecessary luggage; he takes only what is absolutely necessary. So the Christian desires no abundance, but is satisfied if he has what he needs: "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content."—*Tim.* 6: 8.

(*c.*) A stranger bears the hardships of his journey and consoles himself with the thought that his journey will not last long, and that in his home he will find sweet rest. So the Christian also bears with patience and perseverance all the tribulations of the present life, saying with the Apostle: That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.—*II. Cor.* 4: 17.

(*d.*) A stranger pursues his journey quietly, and is careful not to offend any one; he shuns everything that may lead him into difficulties and cause him to be dragged before the court. So the Christian also strives to lead an honest life; he injures no one, shuns dissensions, quarrels and strife, and acts according to the precept of charity. This is the conduct of the Christian who looks upon himself as a stranger and pilgrim on earth. Examine yourselves and sees whether yours is such.

2. St. Peter tells us that we should *refrain ourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul.* These carnal desires are not only all unchaste desires and sins against purity, but in general all sinful desires for temporal things, such as honor, money, property, comforts and enjoyments of every kind. These carnal desires war against the soul, for they cause violent struggles, jeopardize and rob the soul of its life, that is the grace of God and eternal salvation, if they are not bridled and mortified. We must refrain from these carnal desires, according to the counsel of the Apostle: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof."—*Rom.* 6: 12. That carnal desires may not cause our fall, we must carefully watch over our heart and senses, shun the danger and the occasion of sin as much as possible, devote ourselves to prayer and always have God before our eyes.

3. We are to deport ourselves well, *that whereas they speak against us as evil-doers, they may see our good works and glorify God in the day of visitation.* The Christians were odious to the Gentiles and accused by them of various crimes; they were called enemies of human society, voluptuous, stubborn, magicians, murderers of infants. St. Peter admonishes the Christians to refute these false accusations by a pious, holy life, and by that means convince the Gentiles that their charges are totally unfounded. In this way it might happen that the Gentiles, with the aid of God's grace, would come to the true faith. This admonition of the apostle regards us also. As formerly, so now, the Church has many enemies, by whom she is calumniated and blasphemed. The best means to stop the mouth of these calumniators and blasphemers would be for us Catholics to lead a totally blame-

less life, and avoid even the appearance of evil. As soon as they become convinced that we do nothing that is wrong, all our enemies who are not malicious, but are only ignorantly prejudiced against us, will change their way of thinking and finally open their hearts to the truth. If there was ever a time in which the welfare of the Church required her children to give good example, that time is the present. Bad Catholics by their scandals bring the Church into disrepute with her enemies, and thereby cause a great deal of harm. Consider this well and manifest the purity of your faith by the purity of your morals, "and so let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16.

PART II.

St. Peter exhorts the faithful *to be subject to every human creature*, that is to authority, to the divinely constituted power.

1. *For God's sake*, because God wills it so. The temporal authority is necessary for the well-being of human society; without it there would be neither peace nor order. But because God evidently wishes that men should live in a well-ordered condition, and that right and justice should prevail, it is his will also that there should be an authority, a power, to which we should submit. St. Paul expresses this in plain words; "Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God; therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."—*Rom.* 13: 1-3. Every existing temporal authority is ordained by God and holds the place of God in civil society, and consequently, disobedience or rebellion against it is a disobedience or rebellion against God, and draws not only temporal but also eternal punishments after it.

Christians have always considered the temporal rulers to be the representatives of God. Tertullian in his "Apology to the Gentiles" says: "We respect in the emperors the decree of God, according to which he has ordained them to govern the nations. We know that they are the possessors of that power, which he gave them for that end, therefore we make it our holy duty to respect and honor this authority which emanates from God."

2. *As sent by God, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the reward of the good.* The temporal authority is ordained for the welfare of whole nations and communities, as well as of every individual. It is its province to defend innocence against injustice and oppression and secure justice for it, to arrest and punish

evil, to make ordinances, laws and provisions for the general good.

Even our own interest requires us to submit to the authorities and obey them. What would become of human society if there were no legally constituted authority? All order would disappear, no vested rights would be respected, anarchy and rebellion would prevail, there would be no security for life or property, rapine and murder would be the order of the day, because they could be committed with impunity, might would be substituted for right, and the only law recognized would be that of brute force. If every one would ponder this matter well, he would readily admit that self-interest alone, not to speak of moral obligation dictates that we should obey the legally constituted authorities. Grant that this obedience is sometimes difficult and attended with many sacrifices, it must nevertheless be rendered, because the common good demands it, to which the individual good must always be subordinate. Only in the case when the temporal authority commands something sinful or unjust before God, are we justified in refusing obedience. In this case obedience, would be disobedience to God, a disregard of and offense against our Supreme Lawgiver and Master. If the civil authorities demand anything unlawful or sinful, they do not represent God, because it is absolutely impossible for God, through his representatives, to command anything that would be against his holy will. And because the civil authority would not in this case be acting as the representative of God, we are not in this particular case obliged to obey, nay, we could not obey no matter what the consequences might be, since it is never lawful to act against the will of God, for God is to be obeyed before man. In those cases, however, in which we cannot obey, we may refuse obedience, but we must go no further; we are not justified in resisting the lawful authority with force. We can always uphold our rights in a lawful way; we can petition for the redress of grievances; we may may even agitate the question within lawful bounds, but to rebel against the lawful authority, or to take up arms and separate ourselves from it by force, is never allowed. The only weapons which the Christian wields against unjust authorities, are patient endurance, logical reasoning, prayer, and tears. Witness the Christian of the first three centuries. Although on account of their faith they were persecuted in the most unjust manner, their property confiscated, they themselves incarcerated, cruelly tortured and put to death, yet they never rebelled against their persecutors, but patiently endured all these tribulations until it pleased God to remove them.

3. *For so is the will of God, that by doing well you may* ***put to*** *silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Many Gentiles considered the Christians as rebels and dangerous subjects of the state and

calumniated them as such. The Christians met this calumny by obedience in all lawful things. The will of God obliged them to this; besides it would have greatly hindered the propagation of the Christian faith if the imputation of being rebels to the temporal authority had rested upon them.

4. *As free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God.* This is the fourth reason why we should obey the temporal authorities. He means to convey this idea: As Christians you are free from the Jewish ceremonial law, free from the servitude of sin and Satan, but by no means free from all social bonds and civil laws; as servants of God you are still obliged to obey the existing authorities, because it is the will of God that we should obey the higher powers. St. Peter here warns us against those men who preach liberty to the people and call upon them to shake off the yoke of princes and rulers. These false apostles and liberty and men of destruction promise mountains of gold, but as all history proves, it is a delusion und a snare. If they were placed at the head of affairs, they would oppress the people and become their greatest tyrants, and every one whose misfortune it would be to displease them, might just as well look upon it as synonymous with the speedy confiscation of his property, exile, prison, or death. If it were necessary to adduce any examples from history in proof of this assertion, I need only refer to the French Revolution in the last century, and the Communist sedition at Paris in 1870. Do not then allow yourselves to be seduced, but as good Catholics conscientiously fulfil your duties as loyal subjects to your sovereign whether that person be king, queen, emperor, president or czar.

PART III.

Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

St. Peter here obliges all servants, and, in general, all hired assistants—

1. *To honor their masters with all fear.* Masters are the superiors of the servants. Now honor being due to superiors, servants are obliged to honor their masters. It matters not whether the masters are in a high, or a low position, rich or poor, whether according to their conduct they are worthy of honor or not, the circumstance alone that they are set over servants is enough that these must honor them. Hence the Apostle says in general terms: "Whosoever are servants under the yoke, let them count

their masters worthy of all honor."—*I. Tim.* 6: 1. There are, alas, many servants who in different ways offend against this duty. They treat their masters and mistresses as if they were their equals or their subjects, speak to them rudely, and when they imagine themselves offended by them, make bitter reproaches and break out in open invectives against them. This is wrong, he who so treats his master injures no one more than himself.

2. *To be subject to their masters.* "Servants be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your hearts, as to Christ. Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving the Lord, and not to men."—*Ephes.* 6: 5-7. Everything that servants are obliged to do or omit is contained in these words. They are to obey their masters in everything that is not sinful, they are to obey them not only apparently, or as long as the eyes of the masters are upon them, but also in their masters' absence they must be honest and faithful, and serve, not to please men, but God and their own conscience.

PERORATION.

Honor all men; every one, even the lowliest, is an image of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus and has, even if he should be the greatest sinner, his destiny is heaven. Do not despise any person. Love one another as brothers; you have become children of one Father through Christ and daily pray: "Our Father who art in heaven." Being children of God, brothers and sisters, what is more becoming than that you should love one another from your heart? Far from you be all aversion, hatred and enmity. Preserve in your heart the fear of God and guard against nothing so much as displeasing or offending God, your best Father. As good Catholics, fulfil your duties towards the civil authorities; honor them, obey them, pray for them, that, as St. Paul writes, you "may lead a quiet and a peaceable life, in all piety and chastity."—*I. Tim.* 2: 1-3. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL. *John* 16: 16-22. At that time Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while and you shall see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: and because I go to the Father? They said, therefore: What is this that he saith, A little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him: and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me. Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep; but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she had brought for the child, she remembered no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man shall take from you.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE OF OUR LORD.

The gospel for this day, as well as those of the three following Sundays, contains short extracts from Christ's farewell discourse to his Apostles, on the evening of Holy Thursday in the *Cœnaculum* at Jerusalem. As a dying Father, when about to depart from his children, calls them to his side and blesses them, giving them his last solemn admonitions, so Christ gave his Apostles his last lessons and instructions, and addressed many things to their hearts, which he deemed necessary or expedient for them. One cannot read without deep emotion the words which he spoke to these disciples in the hour of his departure. I would recommend all of you to read the whole of this farewell discourse, for I do not doubt but it will make a salutary impression upon you. In it—

I. Christ announces to his Apostles his departure;
II. He tells them what effect that departure will have.

Part I.

A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Let us consider—

1. *The meaning of these words.* It is twofold.

(*a.*) In the first place, the words quoted refer to his *Passion, Death, and Resurrection.* Speaking these words to his disciples on the evening of Holy Thursday, it was indeed only for a little while that they would see him; for on the following day, Good Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon he died on the cross; and before sunset he was laid in the sepulchre. But after a little while they saw their divine Master again, for on the third day, Easter Sunday, he rose from the dead and appeared to them on the same day towards evening, the doors being shut. The meaning of his words is: After a little while you shall see me no more, for to-morrow, about this time, I shall be laid in the sepulchre; but after a little while you shall see me again, for I shall rise from the dead on the third day and appear to you. But this seeing again will also last but a short time, because, after my Resurrection, I shall remain on earth only forty days and then I shall ascend into heaven.

(*b.*) Secondly, we may understand the words of Jesus: *A little while, and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me,* as referring to his Ascension, the life of the Apostles and their admission into heaven. From Holy Thursday to Ascension Day there were only forty-three days, a little while; after this his disciples saw their Master no more, for by his Ascension he withdrew his visible presence from them. After a little while they had the happiness of seeing Jesus again, for their life upon earth did not last very long; with the exception of St. John, who died at a very advanced age, all the Apostles finished their earthly career within twenty or thirty years, therefore not long after Christ's Ascension they were taken up into heaven, where they again saw their dear Lord and will see him throughout all eternity. The meaning is this: The time when I shall leave you is fast approaching, for after forty-three days I shall go to the Father, but after a little while you will see me again, for in a few years you will die and come to me in heaven, where you shall see me for ever.

2. *Let us apply this to ourselves.* The words, *after a little while,* we may refer to everything earthly—

(*a.*) *To our life here below.* "What is your life? It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away."—*James* 4: 15. Many of us count already forty, fifty, sixty, or more years of life; how quickly have these years passed? Do they not appear to us as a moment? And how quickly will the remainder of our life pass! How soon will they say of us: "He is dead, she is dead!" And if we compare our life with eternity, what is it? Not so much as a grain of sand compared with the universe, or a drop of water with the ocean. Thousands and millions of years are not a moment when compared with eternity. There is some relation or ratio between a grain of sand and the universe; infinitesimally small it is true, but between a million of years and eternity there is absolutely no proportion, for the one term is finite and the other infinite. Truly, our life here below is a little while. And this little while of our earthly life is of infinite importance, because eternity depends on it. If we serve God during this little while with fervor and constancy, we shall receive for our reward the everlasting, unspeakable happiness of heaven; but if we serve the world, the flesh, and the devil, eternal, inexpressible woe and exile await us in hell. Oh, how the blessed in heaven rejoice because they have devoted this little while of their earthly life to the service of God! And how bitterly do the damned in hell regret that they have spent this little while of their temporal life in the forgetfulness of God and in the gratification of their passions!

(*b.*) *To all temporal goods* such as beauty, symmetry of form, money, real estate, stocks, bonds, honors and dignities. How transitory and perishable are beauty and symmetry of form! Do they not resemble flowers, which to-day appear in all their splendor and loveliness and to-morrow wither and fall blighted to the ground? How fickle are riches, money, real estate, and stocks! They take to themselves wings and soar away. They can be taken from us by bad men or lost by many mishaps. And even if fortune smiles upon us all our days, must we not leave all behind when we die? How fleeting and treacherous are honors and dignities! The wheel of fortune ever turns, and he who is in the uppermost place to-day, to-morrow will be in the lowest. How foolish, then, should we be if we cared more for these vain, fleeting goods than for our souls, or if for their sake we should plunge ourselves into eternal perdition!

(*c.*) *To sensual pleasures* such as eating, drinking, dancing, playing or carnal lusts. Are not these pleasures the most fleeting of all earthly things? Do they not disappear at the very moment when man begins to enjoy them? What do they leave behind but an empty heart, and if they have been sinful, bitter re-

morse of conscience? Oh, how senselessly does not that man act who seeks such pleasure and forgets his soul and eternity! Reflect that everything here below lasts but a little while, and that the hereafter, heaven and hell, will last for ever; and so go through that which is temporal, that you may not lose that which is eternal.

3. *You shall not see me.* Jesus hides himself sometimes from us, so that we see him no more with the eyes of the spirit, and do not feel his sweet presence in our heart, and the result is, that we no longer find pleasure in prayer, that all pious exercises leave us cold, that faith, hope and charity flag in us, that temptations increase, that despodency and sadness lie on us like a nightmare. Why does God not show himself to us? Sometimes to punish us for a fault which we have committed, for some negligence of which we have been guilty, and sometimes to draw us more closely to himself, because we are too much attached to temporal things or have an inordinate love for something in the world; sometimes to try us, as he did pious Job, because virtue must be tried in the fire, as gold in the furnace; sometimes to give us an opprtunity of increasing our merits for heaven. If God hides himself from us, let us humble ourselves, consider ourselves unworthy of his consolations, correct our faults; and let us continue our exercises, as if we succeeded well with them; then the time of trial will be an advantage to us and we shall see Jesus again, as the Apostles did, to our sweetest consolation.

4. *I go to the Father.* During his whole life upon earth Christ was going to the Father. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work."—*John* 4: 34. Therefore his death also was "going to the Father"; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. Oh, that we may be able to say with confidence, when about to die: *I go to the Father.* We shall be able to do so, if now we go to the Father; if we frequently and with joy think of the Father, love to hear his holy word, diligently visit Jesus in the tabernacle, pray devoutly, and walk in the way of his commandments. Examine yourselves and see whether in such a manner you go to the Father. How deplorable would be your lot if all your life you were on the way to the devil. Do you not shudder at the thought of being obliged at the end of your life to say: "I go to the devil?" May the God of mercy preserve all from such a calamity!

Part II.

The Apostles had not understood the words of their Master; they therefore said to one another: *What is this that he saith to*

us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he speaketh." Jesus does not give them a direct answer, but gives them sufficiently to understand that he speaks of the time of his death, his Resurrection and Ascension, by telling them what results his departure would have for them.

1. *Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice, and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

(*a.*) The meaning of these words is clear. You, my disciples, will lament and weep over my death, because you love me, but my enemies will rejoice, because they hate me and think they have destroyed my doctrine and my memory for ever. But their triumph shall be short. I will rise from the dead; your sorrow shall be turned into joy, whilst terror and consternation shall seize my enemies. What our Saviour predicted has been fulfilled to the very letter. How his enemies rejoiced when they saw him die on the cross! How the Apostles lamented and bewailed the ignominious and painful death of their Lord and Master! Oh, the time from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday was a very sad one for them; but it was only a short time, a little while, for on Easter Sunday, very early in the morning, the risen Saviour appeared to them. What joy and consolation for his disciples; but who can describe the terror of the high-priests, of the Scribes, and of the Pharisees, at the news: "Jesus, whom you crucified, is risen, he lives?"

(*b.*) What occurred at the Death and Resurrection of Christ, occurs and will occur as long as the world lasts. The good lament and weep because they are deprived of the vision of God in heaven, saying with David: "Woe to me, that my sojourning is prolonged."—*Ps.* 119: 5. They lament on account of the stains with which they are still contaminated in spite of their aspirations after Christian perfection, and on account of the sins and vices with which God is so grievously offended; and lastly on account of the sufferings of their mother, the Church, who is everywhere misrepresented, calumniated, oppressed and persecuted. The wicked, on the contrary, rejoice that they can gratify their passions and the desires of their hearts, that religion, virtue and the fear of God disappear more and more from the earth, while unbelief and vice of every kind gain ground. But how will this sorrow and joy end? As it did eighteen hundred years ago. The sorrow of the good will be turned into joy, and the joy of the wicked into sorrow. This frequently occurs in this life, but al-

ways in the next: "Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep. Blessed are ye that weep now, for you shall laugh."—*Luke* 6: 2, 21. Rejoice not with the children of the world, but mourn with the children of God, that after a while you may not mourn with the children of the world, but rejoice with the children of God.

2. *A woman when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.* Our Saviour here compares the sorrow of his disciples with a woman in labor. The pains of travail are—

(*a.*) *Great;* hence the lamenting and wailing of mothers who have a hard and painful delivery. It is for this reason that the Sacred Scripture is accustomed to compare great sufferings with a woman in labor.—*Is.* 13: 8. Great were the pains of the Apostles over the loss of Jesus, for they clung to him with all their soul, and with his death all their hopes were buried in his tomb.

(*b.*) *Necessary,* for without it no child can be born, no woman can become a mother. The pains of the Apostles were also necessary; for if Christ had not died and ascended into heaven, they and the whole human race would not have been redeemed and the Holy Ghost would not have came down for their and our sanctification.

(*c.*) *Transient;* generally they do not last long. So the sorrow of the Apostles did not last long, for after three days the risen Saviour appeared to them, and after a few years he took them to himself in heaven.

(*d.*) *The cause of great joys,* for the more these pains make themselves felt, the more joyously beats the heart of the mother when they are happily passed, and a healthy and well-formed babe is placed in her arms. So the joy of the Apostles upon seeing that Master again was the greater, the more bitter their sorrow had been over his loss. This comparison of a woman in labor with the sorrow of the Apostles is also applicable to us. To suffer is the lot of all men. "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries."—*Job* 14: 1. These sufferings are a natural necessity, for we live upon an earth, which is cursed on account of the sin of man, causing countless sufferings; we have a body subject to a thousand evils, sicknesses, pains, and finally death. To be man and to suffer are

synonymous terms. Sufferings are especially necessary for eternal salvation. As Christ has redeemed us by sufferings, and by sufferings entered into his glory, so we also must suffer in order to share in the fruits of Redemption, and so enter into heaven. "We are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, yet so if we suffer with him." But as the labors of birth are transitory, so all our sufferings in this valley of tears do not last long, and as it does not always rain and blow, but the weather clears up and a calm ensues, so our sufferings are not lasting. Sooner or later, just when we least expect it, better days come. But should they last so long as we live, they still would be short compared with eternity. And as the labor of the mother brings with it great joy when she sees her child, so the sufferings of this life are succeeded by the everlasting joys of heaven. "Blessed is the man that endured temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life."—*James* 1: 12.

PERORATION.

"My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work."—*James* 1: 2, 3. Look upon the Apostles; great was their sorrow for the loss of Jesus, but after three days it was turned into joy, and now they are enthroned in heaven and enjoy after the tribulations of this short earthly life the blessed happiness of heaven. Take, then, your cross upon your shoulders, and carry it courageously after Jesus, *and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.* Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

You shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—John 16: 20.

Sufferings and tribulations are, as our Lord foretold his disciples in the gospel of this day, the portion and common inheritance of all the faithful servants of God. They frequently languish in the greatest poverty, possessing scarcely enough to satisfy the necessary wants of life. They have a feeble, delicate body, are sickly most part of the time, and can hardly ever say that they feel well. The world prepares for them many sufferings. They are treated contemptuously, slighted, ridiculed and mocked; they are calumniated, slandered and robbed of their honor and good name; they are oppressed und persecuted, their property is often taken from them, and they are sometimes even deprived of the inalienable rights of liberty and life. What is it that consoles and keeps them erect and encouraged in the midst of all these sufferings and persecutions, so that they stand the hardest trials without a murmur escaping their lips? What, indeed, but Christian hope? For it is this that assures them of the pleasure of God and puts the most glorious reward before their eyes. They know that they follow their divine Lord on the way of the cross. Hence, I shall speak to you to-day of the great theological virtue of hope, and shall propose and answer the three following questions:

I. What is hope?
II. On what is it grounded?
III. What good does it embrace?

PART I.

Hope is a virtue infused by God into our souls, by which we expect with firm confidence all that God has promised us on account of the merits of Christ.

1. Hope is a *virtue*. By virtue, in general, we understand a certain quality or faculty which inclines and causes us to do that which is good. Hope being called a virtue, we must consider it

as a power abiding in our soul, which enables us in all the circumstances of life to speak and act as hope requires us.

2. Hope is a *virtue infused by God.* As every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (*James* 1: 17), so hope is also a gift of God infused by God. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost."—*Rom.* 15: 13. The Apostle here calls God, the God of hope, to indicate that it is God that gives hope, and moreover attributes the abundance of hope to the power of the Holy Ghost, thereby confessing that hope is infused into the soul by God. With faith and charity, hope is infused into our souls in holy baptism. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."—*I. Pet.* 1: 3.

3. Hope consists in an *expectation;* we *expect all* that God has promised. The expression *to expect* is used to indicate that the good we hope for is *to come,* for what we already possess we do not expect. The words *to expect* give us to understand that we can obtain the good we hope for, for we expect only what we can obtain. The damned in hell no longer expect heaven, because it is impossible that they can ever enter it, and they know it; hence they are in uninterrupted despair.

4. Hope is an expectation joined with a *firm confidence.* If confidence should be wanting to hope, it would be not be hope, but only a *wish.* Thus a poor man may wish for riches, without being able to hope for them, because he has no prospect of them. The firm confidence with which hope must be connected has not its foundation in us, nor in any creature, but in the promises of God, and in the merits of Christ.

5. Hope, finally, consists in this, that we expect all that God has promised us. As we must believe all that God has revealed to us, so we must also hope for all that he has promised us. He that believes all but one of the truths which God has revealed, has, properly speaking, no faith, for if God could err or deceive in only one point, it would be possible also in all others. The same must be said of hope. If we were to question or doubt a single promise of God, we should be obliged to forfeit the entire inheritance of hope, because all the promises which God has made us rest upon the same foundation, namely, his omnipotence, goodness and fidelity.

PART II.

1. Hope is founded on the *promises of God.* All that God has promised us we may and must hope for, because he is *almighty.*

(*a.*) If men promise us anything, we may entertain doubts as to whether or not they will fulfil their promise, for some day they may be in such a position that even with the best will it would be impossible for them to give us what they have promised. It is not so with God. He is omnipotent. "No word shall be impossible with God."—*Luke* 1 : 37. He can, therefore, give us all that he has promised.

(*b.*) *Infinitely good.* "The Lord is gracious and merciful, patient and plenteous in mercy. The Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."—*Ps.* 144 : 8, 9. Striking evidences of the goodness of God are the countless benefits which daily flow to us from his hands, and especially the sending of his Son for our Redemption. "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."—*John* 3 : 16. Not only can God give us what he has promised, because he is almighty, but he will also give it, because he is infinitely good.

(*c.*) *Infinitely faithful.* "God is not as man, that he should lie, nor as the son of man, that he should be changed. Hath he said, then, and will he not do? hath he spoken, and will he not fulfil?" —*Num.* 23 : 19. God assuredly keeps his word, and even the unbelief and ingratitude of man are not able to make him unfaithful to his promises, because he is unchangeable. "What if some of them have not believed? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid."—*Rom.* 3 : 3. Thus we are fully assured that God will give us what he has promised, because he is infinitely faithful.

2. *On the merits of Jesus Christ.* These are, as it were, the pledge of the divine promises and the means of their fulfilment. How can we doubt that he is sincere in his promises, when he has given his only-begotten Son for us? We are sinners, it is true, and have deserved eternal damnation; neither have we wherewith we could satisfy the divine justice for our sins, reconcile ourselves with him and merit heaven for ourselves. But Christ has atoned for us. He has redeemed us, reconciled us with God, and reinstated us in the happy state of children of God. He is our High-priest and Mediator, who most tenderly interests himself for us, and continually offers to his heavenly Father the in-

finite treasure of his merits for the satisfaction of our sins. How can we waver in our hope, since we have such a Mediator and Intercessor with the Father? But withal we must not lay aside *fear* altogether. God has, indeed, promised us eternal salvation, and is ready to give it to us on account of the merits of Christ; but to the promises of God are attached certain conditions, with which we must comply. If we wish to attain salvation, we must have sanctifying grace, and persevere therein to the end. Of this we have no full certainty, for "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."—*Eccltes.* 9: 1. For this reason we must unite fear with hope. We must, however, hope with the exclusion of all fear and doubt, so far as the promises of God and the merits of Christ are concerned. We may well fear when we look at ourselves and consider what we are, because we do not know whether or not we shall persevere to the end and do what is required for the fulfilment of the promises of God. But we must fear nothing so far as God is concerned, because his promises are infallible. You see, then, how beautifully Christian hope tempers our fear, that it may not degenerate into pusillanimity and despair, and how this fear tempers our hope that it may not become presumptuous.

PART III.

Hope embraces all the goods which God has promised. He has promised us:—

1. *Eternal salvation.* God wills that all men should be saved. He has created them for this end. This destiny remained to them even when by sin they had lost it. God had mercy on them and promised them a Redeemer, who came in the fulness of time to seek and to save that which was lost. Therefore our Lord says: "This is the will of my Father that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day."—*John* 6: 40. And the Apostle writes: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor.* 2: 9. Since God has promised us eternal salvation on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, we may with confidence hope to be saved, provided that we do what is required of us.

2. *All things necessary for salvation.*

(*a.*) *The forgiveness of sins.* If it be true that God wills all men to be saved, it naturally follows that he is prepared to forgive their sins, since nothing that is defiled can enter heaven. He

emphatically assures us that he will forgive our sins. "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will forgive them all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me and despised me."—*Jer.* 33: 8. Jesus, during his sojourn here on earth, forgave sins and for the remission of sins he instituted the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. We may therefore with perfect confidence hope for the remission of sins. If we were even the greatest sinners we should not waver in our hope. "Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow, and then come and accuse me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow, and if they be as red as crimson they shall be white as wool."—*Is.* 1: 17, 18. No one need despair by reason of his sins; for "where sin abounded, grace did more abound."—*Rom.* 5: 20.

(*b.*) *The grace necessary for salvation.* Without the grace of God we are not able to do what is required for salvation. Of our own strength we are impotent to overcome temptations, and consequently to preserve ourselves from sin; much less can we perform good, meritorious actions; nay, of ourselves we cannot even think a good thought. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. Now, since God wills all men to be saved, it is evident that he gives to all the graces necessary for salvation. Therefore the Apostle says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—*I. Cor.* 10: 13. "Trust perfectly in the grace which is offered you in the revelation of Jesus Christ."—*I. Peter* 1: 13.

3. *Temporal goods.*

(*a.*) As we belong to a material world, we have various necessities. We need health, nourishment, clothing, shelter, protection in danger, blessing in our undertakings and business. These and similar goods God has frequently promised us. Thus Christ says: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on .... Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."—*Matt.* 6: 25-32.

(*b.*) We must, however, seek these temporal goods only in so far as they are necessary for the obtaining of life everlasting, or in so far as they are no impediment to it. All temporal goods ultimately are only calculated to be means to the end, namely, to serve God and save our souls. Only as means of salvation

therefore must temporal goods be the object of our hope. Hence we may confidently hope that God will give us health, life, food, shelter, prosperity and other temporal blessings, if they are necessary for our salvation. Temporal goods which are not necessary for our salvation, but no obstacle to it, we may likewise hope for, but not so firmly as for eternal salvation, and for grace to practice virtue, because God has promised us unconditionally and always only what is necessary for our salvation. We must therefore leave it to God whether he will give such goods or not. But if temporal goods would imperil our salvation, it is evident that we should not hope for them from God, for as he is solicitous for our welfare, he can give us nothing which he knows would be injurious to us. As we are always ignorant whether what we seek would be beneficial to us or not, we must, when we pray, conform ourselves to the Divine will and leave to God the granting or refusing of it, since he knows best how to distinguish between medicine and poison.

PEORRATION.

I have now explained to you, not only what Christian hope is, and on what it is grounded, but also what we are to hope from God. The first and principal object of our hope should be eternal salvation. It being the will of God that we be saved, he gives us all that is necessary for our salvation; he forgives us our sins and bestows grace to do that which is good. He gives us even those temporal goods which are either necessary for, or conducive to, salvation. There is no deficiency on the part of God, but the question is, is there none on ours? "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised, and let us consider one another to provoke unto charity and to good works."—*Heb.* 10: 23, 24. Serve God with fervor and constancy as long as you live, and I assure you, in his name, that you will obtain that which you have so long and fondly hoped for—life everlasting. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE THREE FEASTS FALLING IN EASTER TIME.

Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep.—*John* 16: 20.

The gospel read for this day is an extract from that pathetic farewell discourse which Christ made to his disciples at the Last Supper, and in which he foretold his departure to the Father, and their weeping and lamenting in consequence thereof. Now the question is, why does the Church at this holy Easter time, which is a time for joy and exultation, turn back and introduce us to those sad and mournful scenes enacted on Calvary and which culminated in the sacred passion and death of the Son of God? She does this to remind us of the important words of the Apostle: "If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?"—*Luke* 24: 26. We also must tread the way of the cross, before we can hope to be crowned with glory and reign with Christ hereafter in heaven. The Church wishes to imprint this truth deeply on our minds; therefore she celebrates several feasts of our Lord, which represent to us his bitter passion. We will make a short meditation on each of them.

Part I.

Pope Innocent VI. instituted in the fourteenth century a feast in honor of the Lance and Nails, the instruments of the passion of our Lord. It is celebrated on the Friday after Low Sunday. [In the United States on the Friday after the second Sunday in Lent.]

1. *The Nails.*

(*a.*) That Christ was fastened to the cross by nails driven through his hands and feet, there is no doubt, for this was the common mode of crucifixion with the Jews. The usual way was to erect the cross first, then the criminal was drawn up and his arms and legs were bound to it by means of cords or ropes, after which the process of nailing began. They used strong iron nails, or what we should call spikes, and having placed them directly over

the joints of the hands and feet, drove them in with the heavy strokes of a hammer and with such violence that they often dislocated the bones.

It sometimes happened that to increase the punishment the hands and feet were nailed twice, for which eight nails were required. But these were exceptional cases; generally the hands and feet were nailed only once, so that only four nails were used. In such a way our Lord was crucified; each of his hands and feet was fastened to the cross with a nail. There are, it is true, many pictures of the crucifixion in which the feet of Christ are laid over each other, the right foot on the left, and fastened to the cross with only one nail. These pictures however, differ from all those produced in the first centuries, for in them each foot is separately fastened to the cross, so that Jesus was crucified not with three, but four nails.

The Prophet foretold that the crucifixion of Christ should be effected by means of nails. "They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones."—*Ps.* 21: 17, 18. "They shall say to him: what are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? and he shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me."—*Zach.* 13: 6. Jesus himself at his apparitions showed his Apostles the marks of the nails in his hands and feet.—*Luke* 24: 39, 40.

(*b.*) The nails with which the hands and feet of Christ were fastened to the cross should always remind us of the sins which are committed by the abuse of the hands and feet. How numerous and grievous are these sins! How often are the hands dishonored by theft, impurity, pride, fighting and homicide! How often do not the feet serve us to visit persons, assemblies or places that cause us to commit the most grievous sins! Examine yourselves on these sins, be sorry for them, and implore Jesus to forgive them for the sake of the pains which he endured during the nailing of his hands and feet. At the same time think of that man who with his hands and feet bound was cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. —*Matt.* 25: 30. The sight of Christ nailed to the cross should encourage you to be nailed with him to the cross, and to remain on it so long as it pleases God. Do not murmur and complain of the sufferings which God sends you, but bear them patiently and constantly, that they may become to you a source of everlasting consolation.

2. *The Lance.*

(*a.*) The bones of our Saviour, like those of the two thieves crucified with him, were to be broken, but by a divine ordinance

it was not done in his case, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "neither shall you break a bone thereof."—*Ex.* 12: 46. Our Blessed Redeemer died about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was customary for a soldier invested with authority to visit the victims in the evening to see whether they were dead or not and make his report accordingly. In case they were not dead he was authorized to break their legs in order to accelerate their death. This soldier came in the evening to perform his hideous task, and the two thieves being still alive, he broke their legs, and coming to Christ he saw that he was dead, but, to convince himself that there was not a spark of life in him, he took his lance and pierced him to the very heart. The head of that identical lance has been preserved in the royal chapel at Paris since the reign of Saint Louis IX.; the shaft of the lance is in Rome, in the Church of St. Peter, where it is venerated on the altar of Longinus, for according to tradition the soldier who opened the side of Christ with a spear was named Longinus. The spear made an opening of a hand's breath in our Lord's side and penetrated through the chest into the heart, from which flowed blood and water. This was the last drop of blood in the body of Christ; he would even shed this to manifest his love for us.

(*b.*) The Fathers of the Church find in the opening of the side of Christ with the spear, and in the water and blood which flowed out of it, important mysteries of our holy religion. According to St. Augustine, the Church has her origin from the opened side of Christ. For, as from the side of Adam, whilst he slept, Eve, the mother of the living, came forth, being formed by God out of the rib of Adam, so from the side of the second Adam slumbering in death proceeded the Church, whom he himself calls his bride, and of whom St. Paul says that Christ loved her and delivered himself up for her that he might sanctify her.—*Ephes.* 5: 25-27.

The water which flowed from the wound of the side of Christ, symbolizes baptism, and the blood, the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. We may say that as the Church so also all the holy sacraments have their origin in the wound of the side of our Saviour, for had he not died on the cross, we should not be redeemed, we should have no Church, no sacraments. Oh, let us love Jesus, as he has loved us, and be willing to make every sacrifice for him and die for him as he has died for us.

Part II.

The *Finding of the Holy Cross*, formerly called *Holy Rood Day*, is a feast instituted in memory of the miraculous finding of the holy cross on which Christ died.

1. *History.* In the year 326, Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, in her old age made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to visit the holy places there. Being very much grieved that the true cross of Christ had never yet been found, and thinking that it might be buried somewhere in the earth, the holy Empress made diligent inquiries as to its whereabouts. All her investigations pointed to Mount Calvary as the place. Accordingly she ordered excavations to be made at her own expense. After much labor it was found where it had been hidden one hundred and eight years before by the pagans, who had erected a statue of Venus over it. She found three crosses of the same size, and not far from them also the inscription on the cross of Christ, it having been detached from the cross. Here a new difficulty arose, namely, to distinguish the cross of Christ from those of the two thieves. Nobody knew which of the three was the cross of Christ. St. Macarius, the holy bishop of Jerusalem, fervently prayed to God to clear up the doubt, and ordered that the three crosses should be taken to a sick woman, who was very dangerously ill, and that she should be touched with each. At the touch of the first and second, no perceptible change or improvement was discernible; but as soon as she was touched with the third, she opened her eyes, rose up and was immediately restored to health. The body of a dead man was also touched with the holy cross and he that had been dead instantly rose up and lived.

The cross was divided. Helen sent one part of it to Constantinople, to her son Constantine, who again divided this treasure and sent half of it to Pope Sylvester. The other part Helen enshrined in a magnificent church, the Church of the Holy Cross, which she built expressly for its reception. The feast of the Finding of the Cross, which the Church at present annually celebrates on the third of May, was celebrated in Rome as early as the time of Gregory the Great.

2. *Lesson.* The Empress Helena sought the holy cross with the greatest zeal, and had no rest till she was so fortunate as to find it. Thus, out of love and gratitude towards our Blessed Lord we must seek the moral cross, that is, sufferings and tribulations, and deem ourselves happy when we find them. For he emphatically says: "He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me."—*Matt.* 10: 38. Take up your cross and follow Christ, and you will live. He went before you and carried his cross. He died for you on the cross that you may carry yours and desire to die thereon.

St. Helena highly venerated the cross, encased it in gold and precious stones, and erected a magnificent temple in its honor. You also should venerate the cross. And for this purpose have a crucifix in your bed-room and say before you go to bed:

"Sweet Jesus, my crucified Saviour, have mercy on me." Sign yourselves frequently with the sign of the cross, especially in temptation, when you are alone. Be not ashamed of the cross of Christ. "Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven, but he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Gal.* 6: 14.

Part III.

The feast of the Crown of Thorns falls on the fifth day of May. [In the United States it is kept on the Friday after the first Sunday in Lent.]

1. *History.* St. Matthew relates that "the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band, and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed and struck his head."—*Matt.* 27: 27-30. Cornelius a Lapide says that the Empress Helena sent from Jerusalem to the church of the Holy Cross in Rome two thorns of the crown of our Lord which he saw himself, and which, as he remarks, were long and pointed, after the manner of thick needles. In the thirteenth century the crown of thorns, the reed, the spear, and the sponge, were given in pledge to the Venetians by the Frank princes, who at that time were in Constantinople and in great want of money. Baldwin II. relinquished his right to the holy relics to Louis, King of France, who redeemed them with the amount of money demanded. He brought the crown of thorns to Paris, where with great solemnity it was deposited in the royal chapel.

The crown of thorns was not only painful to our Saviour because the long and sharp thorns penetrated deeply into his sacred head and everywhere wounded it, but also ignominious, because his enemies put it upon his head to mock him, the Son of God, the King of heaven and earth.

2. *Lesson.* Let us thank our dear Redeemer that he wore the crown of thorns in order to remove from the world the thorns of error and sin, transforming it with his precious blood, and thus the seed of faith and virtue thrives. But let us not forget that we also must bear the crown of thorns, if we wish to obtain the crown of glory. When our Lord offered St. Catherine of

Siena two crowns, the one of precious stones, and the other of sharp thorns, giving her the choice, she took the crown of thorns and chose it for her portion here below. Let us also choose this crown, for it does not become us to crown our head with roses whilst we see a crown of thorns on the head of our Lord and Redeemer. Christ no longer wears a crown of thorns; he is discribed as "having on his head a golden crown."—*Apoc.* 14: 14. In like manner we shall be crowned with the golden crown of the glory of heaven, if we now with constancy wear the thorny crown of humiliation and ignominy.

PERORATION.

The instruments of the passion of our Lord, the spear and the nails, the cross and the crown of thorns, should encourage us to follow him on the way of the cross. Let us bridle our inordinate inclinations and desires, all our exterior senses, the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and watch over them with anxious care that they may not lead us into sin. Let us suffer patiently whatever hard and disagreeable things our life brings with it, and "think not strange the burning heat which is to try us, as if some new thing happened to us, but rejoice, being partakers of the suffering of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we also may be glad with exceeding joy."—*I. Pet.* 4: 12, 13. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE TRAVAIL OF A WOMAN IN CHILDBIRTH A FIGURE OF THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE.

A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.—*John* 16: 21.

These words principally refer to the Apostles. Their life could truly be compared to a woman in labor, for they were obliged to suffer much. But as a woman forgets all her pains when she has brought forth the child and is filled with joy, so the Apostles

thought no more of their anguish when their Master was risen from the dead; and now reigning with him in heaven, they think of their sufferings only with the greatest ecstasy of joy, because they have become to them the source of everlasting happiness. The labor of childbirth, however, is also a figure of the miseries of human life—

I. In their quality;
II. In their end.

Part I.

The pains of childbirth are not alike with all women, nor at each delivery, but different.

1. *Sometimes they are very violent and so painful that they appear almost unendurable.* Women sigh, groan and break out into loud complaints and lamentations. Therefore the Sacred Scriptures compare great sufferings to travail. Isaias fortells the destruction of the inhabitants of Babylon with the words: "Gripings and pains shall take hold of them, they shall be in pain as a woman in labor. Every one shall be amazed at his neighbor, their countenances shall be as faces burnt. Behold the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day and full of indignation and of wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinner thereof out of it."—13: 8, 9.

In that passage the labor of a woman is a figure of the miseries of human life. To live upon earth and to suffer, is one and the same thing. "Man is born to labor and the bird to fly."—*Job* 5: 7. The only difference is that some have more to suffer than others. Examples: *Job*, losing everything, was reduced to the greatest poverty; all his children were killed by the fall of a house and he was afflicted with a terrible disease which day and night caused him great pain. *St. Paul*, who writes of himself: "(I suffered) in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea," etc.—*II. Cor.* 11: 23-27. (*St. Valentine, Martyr*, 18 *May; St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi*, 27 *May.*) *Examples from life:* In every community there are Christians who bitterly feel the miseries of life; such as the blind, the lame, the deformed, the poor, who languish in the greatest necessity, fathers and mothers whose wayward children cause them many sufferings, heart-burnings and tears. On others God does not lay so heavy a cross; they pass a less severe life. There may be some amongst us who are forty, fifty, sixty years of age, and

who never in their life have been afflicted with great sufferings and calamities.

If we ask wherein this different conduct of God towards men has its cause, the answer is: "In his wisdom." "The wisdom of God reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."—*Wis.* 8: 1. He orders and governs everything in such a way as to be the best possible for the individual, as well as for the whole human family. He that has much to suffer receives also great graces so that he may be able to endure, for "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—*I. Cor.* 10: 13. Moreover, those who suffer much have an opportunity of meriting a glorious crown in heaven.

From this we may deduce important lessons. Let us not envy those who have a pleasanter lot than ourselves, for this would be to sin against God's wise ordinances and government. If we enjoy a quiet, happy life, let us thank God for it and humble ourselves before him, for he sees that we are perhaps too weak to cope with difficulties, wherefore he deals with us leniently. If a heavy cross is given us, let us accept it patiently and carry it with constancy, so long as it pleases God, for great sufferings bring a great reward.

2. *The pains are sometimes of long duration, lasting not only a few hours, but even days, till the birth finally follows.* These however, are exceptions. Generally the birth begins to take place as soon as the griping pains have ceased; and as soon as the child is delivered all pain ceases.

Here again we have in the pains of labor a picture of the miseries of human life. We find men who many years, nay, all their lifetime, carried the cross. Examples: The Apostles, whose lives were full of privations, tribulations and persecutions, ending in martyrdom. St. Lidwine died at the age of fifty-three, after she had been afflicted for thirty-eight years with the most painful diseases. She had three large ulcers on her body, out of which large worms frequently crawled, whose bites caused her almost intolerable pain. Her limbs hung together so loosely that she could not be moved except by means of a cloth folded and wound around her. During the last seven years of her life she was obliged to lie on her back, in an immovable position. She was troubled with the dropsy and suffered from complaints in the liver and lungs. Her headache was constant; her teeth gave almost constant pain, and the fever was continuous. Notwithstanding her protracted and painful sickness she said: "If by a single 'Hail Mary' I could obtain perfect health of my body, I would not say it; I do not wish for it." In almost every congregation there

are persons who have protracted suffering; the poor, who languish in great need; the sick, who know not what it is to feel well; the unfortunate, who have a heavy load to carry and who can scarcely hope that better days will dawn for them, their whole life being nothing but constant suffering. But all this is of less frequent occurence; sickness often gives way to health, hard times are succeeded by prosperity, calamities and persecutions have an end, and peace and tranquillity return.

In a period of tribulation and suffering, be it long or short, God has ever our good in view. Let us submit to his holy will without reserve in the firm conviction that all things will turn out well for them that love him. "Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in him, and he will do it."—*Ps.* 36: 5.

Part II.

The pains of labor symbolize also the miseries of human life in their termination.

1. They often lead to a very desirable and prosperous result. After they are over, the mother not only feels well, but sees her new-born child. And what greater joy can there be for a mother to see her offspring! And at the sight of it she no longer remembers the pains she suffered in bringing it forth; she would even, were it necessary, endure the same pains again and even greater ones; so much does the sight enrapture her. So it is also with the sufferings and tribulations of life, if we take them upon ourselves for the love of God and in the spirit of penance. They bring us the sweetest consolation and joy, compared to which all the joys of the world are as a mere nothing. Examples:

(*a.*) You wish to make a general confession because your conscience is disturbed. But it is difficult for you; fear and anguish seize you, you tremble and hesitate. But finally you overcome your natural weakness and really make a sincere and good confession of your whole life. What tranquillity, consolation and peace now dwell in your heart! You feel so happy. Many after such a general confession say, full of rapture: Oh, if you would give me the whole world with all its wealth and pleasures, I would not exchange for it the happiness which has been imparted to me through making a general confession.

(*b.*) You suffer a grievous temptation. The enemies of your soul present the evil to you enchantingly, they captivate your imagination, excite your sensuality, repeat their assaults again and again, and endeavor by all means to cause your fall. But

you resist manfully the most violent and protracted temptation, you reject it again and with the help of the divine grace you come forth victorious from the hard-fought battle. How do you feel after overcoming such a temptation? Do you not feel great consolation? Is it not as if your Father in heaven were saying to you: Well done my child, I shall reward you with an eternal weight of glory.

(*c.*) Imagine yourselves on your death-bed. If you look back upon your past life, what will console and rejoice you more than the thought that you have borne all the trials, tribulations, and sufferings of your earthly pilgrimage, with patience and in a penitential spirit. If a laborer in the evening rejoices because the labors of the day are over and he can enjoy his well-earned repose, how you will rejoice on your death-bed, if you can say with the Apostle: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; as to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice."—*II. Tim.* 4: 7, 8. We need not wonder that the faithful servants of God looked for death with the greatest longing, greeting it as their best friend. A forester one day met a poor leper, singing though evidently dying. "How can you sing considering the state you are in?" he said to him. The leper replied: "Between me and God there is only the wall of my body; now I see it going to pieces, and the prison falling, therefore I rejoice and sing."

(*d.*) Turn your eyes to eternity and contemplate the saints in heaven. All the sufferings which they endured on earth are now over, all warfare is ended, there is nothing any longer to sadden them, the words are realized in them: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new." Who can describe the joy of the Blessed who can say: All our temporal sufferings are over for ever, nay, it is these sufferings that have prepared for us the inexpressible joys of heaven, for if it were not for them we should either not be in heaven or at least be deprived of a great part of our happiness for ever.

2. *They have sometimes ended badly.* After lasting long and having caused almost unendurable pains to the woman in labor, she brings forth a deformed, a crippled, or a dead child. What grief for such a mother! Must not the reflection that all she has endured is in vain be more painful to her than all her pains?

Many will have a worse end than such an unhappy mother. To this class belong—

(*a.*) *Those who suffer in the state of sin.* We know that nothing good which is done in the state of sin is meritorious before God, or can lay claim to a reward hereafter. He who is contaminated with a grievous sin is destitute of the love of God, but he who does not possess the love of God, can do nothing meritorious for heaven. "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3. The same may be said of the sufferings and tribulations of life, which justly are numbered with good works, because they are according to the will of God and in holy Writ have the promise of a great reward. He who suffers in the state of sin suffers fruitlessly for heaven. If a person were to lie on a sick-bed for years, were he to experience in his life trials and sufferings of every sort; were he despised by the world, and persecuted; were he even to sacrifice his life for his faith, yet if he had grievous sins on his conscience, all would profit him nothing, all would be without merit for heaven. Are not those who suffer in the state of sin in a more deplorable condition than a woman who, after the terrible pains of travail brings forth a dead child? And how many such unhappy persons there are!

(*b.*) *Those who accept the sufferings and tribulations of life, not for God's sake, but only for temporal motives, who in their sufferings are destitute of a good intention.* Whatever we do or suffer, in order to gain merit for heaven, must be done for God's sake, because he wills it and out of reverence, obedience and love for him. He who is in his life bears many trials and tribulations, but has not God, but temporal things, money, honors, dignities, human praise, human favor, in view, labors, suffers and fatigues himself in vain so far as heaven in concerned. He who suffers, not for God, but for the world, or for the gratification of his passions, is not a martyr of Christ, but of the devil. And how many such martyrs of the devil does the world count! And how badly off are such persons who at the end of their life, in their dying hour, and for all eternity are obliged to say to themselves: we have suffered much in our life-time, but in vain; "we have labored all the night (how truly) and have taken nothing."—*Luke* 5: 5.

(*c.*) Lastly, those who suffer *with impatience.* To render trials and tribulations meritorious it is absolutely necessary that they be accepted and endured with patience and resignation to the will of God. Therefore the Apostle says: "Patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise."—*Heb.* 10: 36. He that suffers, and suffers much, but with impatience, need not expect any reward for his sufferings. But

that is not all; he who endures his trials and tribulations impatiently merits nothing, but renders himself liable to the divine punishment, for the simple reason that impatience is a sin. Cast a look upon the two thieves who were crucified with Christ. Both suffer the same torments, but how unlike is their lot in eternity! The one is in heaven, the other in hell. Why? Because the one suffered death patiently and penitently, and the other impatiently and impenitently. "There are people among us who, if a calamity befalls them, if they are offended by any one, if they fall sick, if they suffer pain in their head or elsewhere, at once break out into blasphemies. They suffer the pains of sickness, but deprive themselves of the advantages which they might gain by them. What dost thou do, O man? Thou blasphemest God, thy Benefactor, thy Saviour, thy Protector and Provider. Dost thou not see that thou art hastening to the precipice and about to be engulfed in the abyss of perdition?"—*St. Chrysostom.*

PERORATION.

Conduct yourselves in the sufferings and tribulations of life as a woman in labor. She knows that the pains are necessary, and that without them she cannot become a mother. She endures them, though they are great and protracted, with patience and fortitude, in the hope that God will present her with a child. Let us also endure with patience, fortitude and a good intention whatever difficult and disagreeable things life may bring and preserve a good conscience, so that in this way we may suffer meritoriously and receive a reward in heaven. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

THE EFFICACY OF TEARS.

You shall lament and weep.—*John* 16: 20.

These words are more or less applicable to all men, for in every one's life, sooner or later, a time of lamenting and weeping must come. There is, indeed, apparently much laughter in the

world, but there is probably more weeping; and many of those who laugh do not laugh in their heart, for they feel more inclined to weep than to laugh. Ever since sin came into the world the earth has been a valley of tears. But still we must consider it a blessing that it is possible for us to weep and to shed tears. If the damned in hell could shed only a single penitential tear they might entertain the hope of being at length rescued, but as hell is not like the earth, a valley of tears, but a dungeon, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, they never can escape their torments.

Water has, among others, these three effects: it cleanses from filth, is extinguishes fire, and it carries ships and people to the remotest parts of the world. Tears, as I shall show you to-day, have the same effects.

I. They cleanse from the stains of sin;
II. They extinguish the fire of hell;
III. They carry us to heaven.

Part I.

The tears which flow from a contrite heart have a wonderful virtue—*they cleanse from the stains of sin*—

1. *Like Baptism.*

(*a.*) It is an article of faith, that by baptism all sins, original and actual, are blotted out. This is evident from the words of Christ; "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* 3 : 5. All sins exclude from the kingdom of God, that is from heaven; now, if baptism fits man for heaven, it is evident that it forgives all sins, original as well as actual, if the person to be baptized be contaminated with the latter.

(*b.*) Tears have the same effect; they are, as it were, a second baptism, for if they have their source in the perfect love of God they cleanse the conscience from all stains of sin, be they ever so grievous and numerous. Examples: *St. Peter*, who, by the triple denial of his Lord, had grievously sinned, but who found mercy with God because he bitterly bewailed his fall, wherefore Pope Leo the Great says: "Blessed be thy tears, holy Peter, which had the virtue of baptism for the washing away of the guilt of thy denial". *St. Mary Magdalen*, the public sinner of ill-repute, who at the feet of Christ, which she bedewed with her tears and wiped with her hair, found grace and heard the consoling words: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath

loved much."—*Luke* 7: 47. This baptism of tears is not a sacrament, but it surpasses in some respect the Sacrament of Baptism inasmuch as it can be repeated, whilst this is not possible with the sacramental rite. Hence St. Augustine calls penitential tears a salutary bath, which cleanses the human heart as often as it needs cleansing. Oh, how gracious and merciful is God, who in penitential tears has given us so easy and so effectual a means for the recovery of the lost baptismal grace? How grateful we should be for this means, and how zealously we should avail ourselves of it!

2. *Like martyrdom.*

(*a.*) He who suffers death for Christ, that is, for the Christian faith, some Christian virtue, or the performance of his Christian duty, is a martyr. Martyrdom, as well as baptism, leads to heaven, and it is even a substitute for baptism with water. Wherefore also the unbaptized who give their life for Christ can be saved. So Christ assures us in plain words: "He that shall lose his life for me shall find it."—*Matt.* 10: 39.

(*b.*) Again, tears have the same effect; they are, as it were, a baptism of blood, by which all sins are washed away. If a martyr should even be contaminated with grievous sins, they are forgiven him, if for the love of Christ he makes a sacrifice of his life. The same is done when a sinner, like the penitent Magdalen, repents of his sins for God's sake. He is cleansed from all stains of sin. Oh, the amazing virtue of tears! Not all are called to the palm of martyrdom; it is not granted to all to shed their blood for Christ; but all can shed tears, all can truly repent of their sins and cleanse their soul from the filth of sin. As we wash our face so soon as we perceive any filth on it, so let us not delay to wash our heart with penitential tears, if we have defiled it by a sin.

3. *Like the passion of Christ.*

(*a.*) A missionary, in order to demonstrate to his pagan hearers how men are cleansed from their sins through the passion of Christ, showed them a knife covered all over with rust. Then he opened a little phial and let a few drops of the fluid fall upon the knife, and lo, in a moment the knife became as bright as a mirror and all the rust disappeared. "Behold," said the missionary, "unclean and dull as this knife was the heart of man, but it has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, so that it appears clean and bright." What this missionary illustrated in this way is expressed in the Sacred Scripture in the plainest words.

Thus St. John the Baptist calls our Saviour the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world" (*John* 1: 29); and St. John, the beloved disciple of the Lord, writes: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."—*I. John* 1: 7.

(*b.*) Tears have the same effect, if they flow from a truly contrite heart. As Christ has prepared in his sacred blood a laver in which we are washed clean, so penitential tears are a bath in which we may be cleansed from all sins. Who would not be astonished at this efficacy of tears! But these tears must be truly penitential, not merely flowing from the eyes, but tears which have their source in a true, supernatural repentance.

Part II.

Another effects of tears is, that *they extinguish the fire of hell.* They produce this effect—

1. *When they are abundant.*

(*a.*) David had grievously sinned, for he had committed adultery and murder. Through these crimes he had made himself guilty of eternal damnation, and if he had died impenitently, he would have found his place in hell. But being brought by Nathan to the knowledge of his injustice and crime, he commenced to bewail his sins: He says of himself: "I have labored in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed; I will water my couch with my tears. My eye is troubled through indignation."—*Ps.* 6: 7, 8. How many penitential tears must this holy king have shed when every night he watered his couch with his tears, and when his eyes were troubled with incessant weeping! But these tears were so efficacious that they extinguished for him the fire of hell. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "Tears like David's quench even the fire of hell."

(*b.*) A certain young man who had led a very sinful life one day saw a picture representing the great penitent David on his knees, and flowing from his eyes were tears which an angel received in a golden cup. Beneath the picture were written these words: "David sinned only once, and always wept; you sin always and never weep." The picture and the words made so deep an impression upon the young man that he at once began to bewail his sins and to cleanse himself from them by a sincere confession. We all have sinned, and many of us much and grievously, and deserved hell not only once, but again and again. Let us take David for our pattern and bewail our sins not only with ex-

terior, but also with interior tears, that we may thereby extinguish the fire of hell.

2. *Even if they be few.*

(*a.*) We read in the writings of Daniel that the three Hebrew youths, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, were cast into a fiery furnace, because they would not adore the statue of Nabuchodonosor. The furnace, heated seven times more than was customary, threw out so great a heat that the men who threw the youths into the fire were slain by the flames. But the three young men walked in the midst of the fire, unharmed, praising God. The king also approached the funace and exposed himself to the heat even more than the men who were burnt, but he remained unhurt. Now the question is: "Why was the king not hurt by the heat, whilst those men lost their lives?" St. Chrysostom answers this question, saying: "King Nabuchodonosor was not afraid of the burning flames, because he carried with him the tears that extinguish the fire. The fire spared the king, because he acknowledged his sins and repented of them." We have here a figure of the fire of hell, which consumes the impenitent sinner, but does not touch the truly penitent.

(*b.*) When the holy bishop Mamertus saw that the city of Vienne, in France, was devastated by a fearful conflagration, he said to those who carried water; "This conflagration must be extinguished more with the water of the eyes, than that of the rivers." By divine inspiration he knew that the conflagration was a punishment of God on account of the sins of men and concluded from this that the conflagration should be stopped more by penitential tears than by natural water. Sinner, for you is kindled the fire in hell, which burns for ever; but you have an effectual means of extinguishing it, namely, by penitential tears. If these tears flow from a contrite heart, they extinguish the fire of hell, even if they be only few.

3. *If there be only one.*

(*a.*) Antipater once wrote Alexander the Great a letter which contained strong accusations against his mother. Alexander, having read the letter said: "Antipater seems not to know that a single tear of my mother wipes away letters full of accusations." The same may be said of the sins of men. Though their sins be great and numerous, a single tear is able to extinguish the fire of hell, which their sins deserve. St. Augustine says: "All the water in the world is unable to extinguish a single spark of hell-fire, but one tear from a truly contrite heart extinguishes

hell-fire itself." St. Vincent Ferrer remarks: "If a damned soul in hell could shed only one penitential tear, hell-fire would instantly be extinguished."

(*b.*) How easy has God made it for the sinner to escape hell-fire! How happy would a criminal, condemned to be burnt, deem himself, if by a single tear he could avert from himself this terrible death. And yet there are so many sinners who to rescue themselves from the fire of hell are not willing to make even this easy sacrifice. If hail destroys their crops, fire burns their house, a disease kills off their cattle, or if sickness disables them, or any other evil befalls them, they have tears in abundance; they groan and moan enough to move the very stones to compassion, but they have no tears for their excesses and vices on account of which the everlasting fire of hell is kindled for them; nay, so far from afflicting themselves on their account, they are always merry and in a good humor; and whilst laughing they plunge themselves into perdition. What an incomprehensible delusion?

Part III.

Finally, it is tears that will *carry us into heaven*, for heaven—

1. *Is promised to those that mourn.*

(*a.*) Christ emphatically says: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."—*Matt.* 5: 5. By those that mourn, we must here understand chiefly those who mourn for their sins, and are sorry for having offended God, their greatest benefactor and most kind father. St. Augustine says: "Nothing is nearer to misery than a tear, and nothing more remote from misery than happiness. And yet it is said: 'Blessed are they that mourn.' How then can they that mourn be blessed? Only in respect to the promise of Christ that they shall be comforted in heaven. As soon as God sees that a sinner repents of his sins and bewails them, he turns to him full of love and mercy, and assures him of forgiveness, grace and heaven."

(*b.*) It would be a blessing if God would regard the tears we shed for our sins in so far that he would not condemn us eternally; but what must we say, when he has, in consequence of these tears, assured us of heaven with all its unutterable, everlasting joys? Is not this a goodness, a mercy, that transcends all measure? Where is the father who not only most cheerfully forgives his son who has grievously offended him, directly he sheds the first tear, but also rewards him most bounteously? Oh, let us consider this goodness of our heavenly Father and bewail

our sins with tears of sincere repentance, that we may participate in the great promise which Christ makes to those that mourn!

2. *Is promised to those that mourn.*

(*a.*) It is certain beyond doubt that heaven is due to the just, and that God cannot deprive them of it, because he has promised it to them, and it is impossible for him not to keep his promise. Now, if a man be a sinner, even a great sinner, he becomes, if he truly repents of his sins, a just man, a saint, and consequently heaven is due to him. If God even had decreed to deprive him of eternal salvation and to condemn him to the fire of hell, the penitential tears of the sinner would have so great an efficacy that they would compel God to alter his decree, and not to reject such a sinner, but to save him. The reason is, because God makes only a conditional decree to condemn a person, and alters it the moment the sinner alters his disposition and does penance. Hence St. Chrysostom says: "If before a human court, after the sentence is passed, you weep and lament, you will not by your weeping change the sentence, but before the divine tribunal you will change the sentence, if from your heart you cry for mercy."

(*b.*) What a consoling truth for us all, who from our childhood have sinned so much! Even though God has blotted our names out of the book of life, in which they were inscribed at our baptism; even though the devil has enrolled our names in the book of death, our penitential tears will repair all: as soon as we shed penitential tears the devil sees himself obliged to erase our names from his book, and Christ reinscribes them in his. O sinners, why do you not shed penitential tears, and be converted to God in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning?

3. *Will be given to those who mourn.*

(*a.*) Heaven is not given to all, but only to those whe labor for it, according to the words of Christ: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—*Matt.* 11: 12. Who are they that use violence and bear heaven away? They are the just, who take care not to fall into mortal sin, but constantly to lead a virtuous life: and sinners who having had the misfortune to fall into grievous sins endeavor to rise again and to wash away their sins with penitential tears. These, like the just, will bear away heaven, because, like them, they use violence.

(*b.*) There are countless saints in heaven, and among them, if we except the children who died in their baptismal innocence,

there are more who have been saved in the way of penance than in the way of innocence. Nay, many penitents will occupy a higher rank than the innocent, because by their persevering zeal for penance they have acquired more merits. Oh, what consolation for us all, who must acknowledge ourselves as sinners before God, and what an encouragement for us to bring forth fruits of penance.

PERORATION.

Let us follow the admonition of Almighty God: "Be converted to me with all your heart in fasting, in weeping and in mourning."—*Joel* 2: 12. Let us bewail our sins, not only apparently, but truly, from the bottom of our heart, with contrition and sorrow for all our sins, for the sake of God, whom we have grievously offended, and whose love and grace we have lost, with the firm purpose of never more offending him; also let us make a good confession and conceal nothing out of fear or shame that we know to be sin. These are the tears which remove the filth of our sins, extinguish the fire of hell, and carry us to heaven. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE FOLLY OF THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD, AND THE WISDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. —*John* 16: 20.

There is a remarkable difference between the joys of the children of the world, and those of the children of God. What gives pleasure to the former, gives pain to the latter, and what makes the former sad, makes the latter rejoice. Thus the Scribes and Pharisees rejoiced over the death of Christ, while the Apostles lamented and wept; but after he had risen from the dead, the Scribes and Pharisees lamented, and the Apostles rejoiced. So it is to-day. Infidels rejoice at the present tribulations of the

Church, but believing Christians lament and weep. But when the time comes, and we sincerely and confidently hope that time is near at hand, when the Church will again triumph, her enemies will lament, but her children will rejoice. Of this joy and sadness of the children of the world and of the children of God our Saviour speaks in the gospel of this day, saying: *You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* Let us consider—

I. The folly of the children of the world: ***"The world shall rejoice."***
II. The wisdom of the children of God: ***"You shall be made sorrowful."***
III. The joy of the children of God: ***"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."***

PART I.

Christ expresses the folly of the children of the world in these words: *The world shall rejoice.* To form a correct idea of the foolish joy of the children of the world we need only consider—

1. *The time of their joy.* When do they rejoice? During the time of their earthly life. But is this a suitable time for joy? Certainly not.

(*a.*) Because this earthly life is a pilgrimage, a journey. "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come." —*Heb.* 13: 14. As rivers take their course to the sea, so we are continually approaching the boundless ocean of eternity. Our voyage is of the greatest importance to us, because it will decide our doom for all eternity. If we arrive safely at our journey's end, blessed are we, for our haven of rest is in heaven; but if our frail bark is stranded or dashed upon rocks, woe to us; we shall be wrecked in hell.

(*b.*) Because our earthly life is a time to learn, a time during which we must prepare ourselves for eternity. It is the duty of an apprentice, a pupil, or a student, to use all diligence and application in order to acquire the necessary knowledge for his trade, business or profession, because his happiness and prosperity in life depend on it. Our life here is nothing else but an apprenticeship. We must perfect ourselves in all the Christian virtues; we must learn the greatest of all arts, *to serve God and save our souls,* for only thus shall we attain heaven.

2. *The place of their joy.* What is this earth? Elysian fields! No; it is a vale of tears. "To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears." How much wretchedness is there not upon the earth? How many languish in the greatest poverty and need, how many lie sick and suffer the greatest pains both day and night! how many are totally forsaken and find no one to help them! And we frequently see that the good are oppressed and persecuted by the wicked, that vice and lies triumph over virtue and truth; we see men add sin to sin and as it were rush headlong into perdition, with their eyes wide open. And all this does not affect the children of the world in the least; they eat, drink, and enjoy themselves, laugh, dance and play, as if all around them were full of joy and merriment. Is this not the greatest folly? But as there is much misery and wretchedness in the world, shall we renounce all joy and always mourn? No, the Christian may rejoice, but in the right way, without sin, with a good intention, without passion, at the right time; wherefore the Apostle says: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say, rejoice."—*Phil.* 4: 4. But the children of the world do not rojoice in such a way. Reflect and see whether your past joys were in the Lord.

3. *The object of their joy.* At what do they rejoice? At the growth of virtue and religion? At the victory of a good cause? At the prosperity of the people? No, they are indifferent in regard to all these things, or they excite in them only envy and other evil passions, so that they become angry and dejected. Thus the leaders of the Jews were grieved at the great docility which Christ found among the masses of the people, and full of indignatiou said: "Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after him."—*John* 12: 19. They belong to those of whom it is written in the Book of Proverbs: "Who are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in most wicked things; whose ways are perverse, and their steps infamous"—2: 14, 15. They rejoice at the persecution of the Church and of those who cling to her with all their heart; they rejoice when they have robbed a soul of faith, innocence, or virtue; they rejoice at their injustices and deceptions in their dealings with others; they rejoice in the enjoyment of vain pleasures and the gratification of their mean and despicable passions. Are these reasonable joys? No; the very contrary, because they regard only sinful or at least vain and useless things. How many may there be among us who rejoice in a foolish way!

4. *Lastly, the duration of their joys.* How perishable, how fleeting are they! Some of these joys, especially carnal pleasures, pass

away directly they begin; others, such as banquets, dances, games, theatricals, etc., last a few hours. And suppose you enjoy all possible pleasures for years, at last you will fall sick, become old and even incapable of enjoying them any longer, and finally death comes which puts a stop to all earthly pleasures, and leaves nothing but the confused and indistinct remembrance of having enjoyed them; and this is oftentimes a sad reminiscence, full of melancholy and bitterness. Do you think it is wise to run after these vain and fleeting pleasures? Would it not be folly to give yourselves to those joys and amusements, which only burden your conscience and make death hard?

PART II.

The wisdom of the children of God is contained in the words of Christ: *you shall be made sorrowful.* The sorrow of the children of God is true wisdom, for they mourn—

1. *Over their sins, defects and imperfections.* Examples of such sorrow we have in *David,* who, as he says himself, watered his couch every night with his tears (*Ps.* 6: 7); in *Mary Magdalen,* who, prostrate at the feet of the Lord, shed a flood of tears; in *Peter,* who went out and wept bitterly. The saints grieved over even the smallest faults, and persevered in repentance all their life. St. Aloysius was so much grieved at two small faults which he committed when a child, and which could scarcely be called sins, that he fainted away at his first confession. St. Jerome relates of St. Paula, that she bewailed her venial sins so bitterly that you would have thought her guilty of the greatest crimes. This sorrow for our sins is great wisdom, for it spurs us on to the amendment of our lives, strengthens us in our holy desires, obtains many graces from God, and blots out the temporal punishments due to our sins. Should not these fruits of repentance impel us daily to bewail our faults?

2. *Over the sins of others, over the unbelief and scandals of the world, and over the loss of so many souls.* Thus Christ wept over Jerusalem, and full of sadness said: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes."—*Luke* 19: 42. St. Paul's grief over the unbelief and obstinacy of the Jews was so great that he was willing to become even anathema, to be accursed for their sake: "I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren."—*Rom.* 9: 2-3. St. Francis of Assisi bewailed the ingratitude of the people for the infinite love bestowed upon them by their crucified Redeemer, with such constant and bitter tears,

that he almost lost his eye-sight. This sorrow of the children of God is wisdom, because it originates from the *love of God and our neighbor. From the love of God.* As it afflicts a child that loves his parents to see that they are injured and offended, so a Christian who sincerely loves God is grieved when God is so much and so grievously offended. *From the love of our neighbor.* He who truly loves his neighbor wishes him well, rejoices at his prosperity, and is grieved when misfortune or afflictions befall him. Knowing that sin makes man unhappy for time and eternity, it is quite natural that he should be grieved at the sins of his fellow-men. He therefore who is not sorry that God is grievously offended, and that so many continue in sin and perish, has not even the appearance of the love of God and his neighbor.

3. *Over the sufferings and persecutions of the Church.* St. Teresa was deeply grieved at the injury inflicted on the Church in the sixteenth century by the so-called Reformation; she prayed and wept, and would gladly have sacrificed her life, if thereby she could have averted the calamity from the Church. This is a wise sorrow and sadness, because it is based on love for the founder of the Church. The Church is our mother, we have all been spiritually born of her in holy baptism, and she provides for all the necessities of our soul with a true mother's instinctive affection. Who is it that instructs us in all those things which are necessary for our salvation? Who is it that leads us to virtue, admonishes and corrects us and daily offers the holy sacrifice of the mass for us, purifies and sanctifies us in the holy sacraments, in short, does everything to lead us to heaven? The Church. Every good Catholic know this. Hence he belongs to her with body and soul, and therefore should love her as a good child loves his mother. The consequence is that he is sorrowful when he sees the Church in suffering and tribulation. He who is indifferent to the prosperity and adversity of the Church, or who even rejoices when the Church is persecuted, may have the name of *Catholic*, but, in truth, he is not one. Such a person is worse than an infidel.

4. *Lastly, over the dangers of salvation, to which they are exposed, and because they must remain so long on earth and cannot see God.* Thus David sighed: "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged."—*Ps.* 119: 5. Hear the Apostle: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—*Rom.* 7: 24. St. Jerome called death his dearest brother and his sweetest consolation: "My soul disdains the world, I perish with the desire to see thee, O most amiable Jerusalem, my dear home, blessed abode of the chosen people of my God." This sorrow also is wisdom on account of the basis on which it rests, and on account of the

effects which it produces. It is grounded on the love of God, the Supreme Good, which it fears to lose and desires with all desire to possess. It has very salutary effects; it impels us always to watch and pray and to employ all means for preservation from sin; it detaches our hearts from the world, directs our thoughts to heaven, and strengthens us in the service of God. How is it with you? Have you this salutary fear? Is your fear so great that it is impossible or at least improbable that you will ever again offend Almighty God? Do you, with St. Paul, wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ? Do you, at least, entertain no inordinate love for the world, and do you live so that you can meet death with a good conscience?

PART III.

Christ expresses the joy of the children of God in these words: *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* This joy manifests itself already—

1. *In this world.*

(*a.*) The children of God bewail their sins and are rejoiced at the forgiveness of them. They rejoice over the grace of conversion which so many sinners obtain through their prayers and tears. They are rejoiced at the protection and victory which God ever gives to the Church in her sufferings and persecutions. Who can describe this joy? What a happiness the faithful Catholic experiences after having made a good general confession! How much did not the saintly Monica rejoice when, after many long years of praying and weeping, her impetuous Augustine was converted! And what joy and exultation prevailed among Christians when after three hundred years of persecution they obtained peace; the Emperor Constantine was baptized, and the triumphant cross was set up in the place of the Roman eagles, and shone as the brightest of all the jewels in the diadem of the Cæsars!

(*b.*) The sorrow of the children of God has this peculiarity that it is connected with sweet joy and consolation. Therefore St. Augustine says: "Sweeter are the joys of prayer than the joys of the theatre." Yes, if there be any true joy on earth it is this holy sorrow amidst which the indescribable consolations of the Holy Ghost flow to us. He who has experienced them, knows them; but he who has never experienced sorrow and wept as pious souls do, penetrated by the spirit of penance, has no conception of such tears. Such tears are as refreshing "as the dew of Hermon, which descendeth upon Mount Sion."—*Ps.* 132: 3.

2. *In the other world.* Their joy will be perfect. The words of the Psalmist will be fulfilled in them: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves."—*Ps.* 125: 5, 6. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more: for the former things are passed away."—*Apoc.* 21: 4. But the children of the world, who now laugh and do not understand the sorrow of the children of God, full of sadness and sorrow shall say: "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."—*Wisd.* 5: 4, 5.

PERORATION.

How foolish would you be if you should follow the ways of the children of the world and rejoice with them, since their joys have such a sad issue! No, no, be sorrowful rather with the children of God, for their sorrow is true wisdom, since it produces the most glorious effects. If you lament and weep with the children of God, you will, even on earth, be more joyful than the children of the world amidst all their pleasures and carnal enjoyments, and hereafter "that which is at present momentary and light of your tribulation will work for you above measure an exceeding weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4: 17. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

EPISTLE. *James* 1: 17-21. Dearly beloved: Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures. You know, my dearest brethren: and let every man be quick to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of malice, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ALL GOOD GIFTS COME FROM GOD. LESSONS THEREFROM.

The epistle, of which I have read a small portion to you, has St. James, a relative of our Lord, for its author. To distinguish him from another James, who also was an apostle, and a son of Zebedee and brother of St. John, he is surnamed THE LESS, probably because he was younger. He was the first bishop of Jerusalem, and led a very austere life; he ate no meat, drank no wine and prayed so much that his knees had a thick, hard skin like a camel's. On account of his righteousness, which even the Jews admired in him, he was called the "just man". In the year of our Lord 64 he was accused by the Pharisees, those arch-enemies of Christianity, as a transgressor of the law, and was stoned. St. James wrote an epistle to the faithful in which he teaches them several truths, specially insisting upon the necessity of a living faith; reproves them on account of certain abuses and sins prevalent among them, earnestly exhorts them to patience, and gives them very important rules for the regulation of their life. We will consider the contents of the epistle of this day a little more closely; the apostle states therein—

I. The truth, that all good gifts come from God, and draws from it—

II. Some lessons which we should follow.

Part I.

1. *Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration.*

(*a.*) By the expression: *Every good gift,* we first understand all natural goods, such as life, health, food, raiment, prosperity, reason, liberty of will. All these are good gifts, because, coming from God, the Supreme Good, they are good in themselves, and are to serve for the glory of God and the salvation of our souls. By the words *every perfect gift,* the apostle indicates especially the supernatural goods or the gifts of grace, such as faith, hope and charity and all other virtues, the holy sacrifice of the mass, the holy sacraments, the grace of aid and sanctifying grace, in short, all those blessings which God communicates to us for our eternal salvation on account of the merits of Christ. The supernatural gifts are called *perfect,* partly because they are far more valuable than natural goods, partly because they are a free gift of God, whilst natural goods, although also free and undeserved, are gifts belonging to, and necessary for our human nature.

(*b.*) All natural and supernatural good gifts are *from above,* that is, from God. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—*I. Cor.* 4: 7. From this arises a double obligation for us; first, we must be thankful to God for all that we have and are; and secondly, we should employ all goods and gifts according to his will and guard against abusing them by sin. How many sins are committed against this double obligation! Resolutions.

(*c.*) God is called *the Father of lights,* because he is in himself the most perfect, holy, and best being, and the source of all goodness. All *corporeal* light comes from him, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all other light-giving bodies, as gas, wax, oil. All *spiritual* light comes from God, all the knowledge, and science of men and angels. In knowledge and science the angels surpass all men more than the greatest sage surpasses an ignorant child. How great must be the knowledge of the angels! All supernatural light comes from God. His holy word, which teaches us all that we must believe, hope for and do, in order to become holy and to be saved; then interior lights and inspirations and

the gifts of the holy Ghost. God is however called *Father of lights*, because the Son, who is "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," is begotten of him.—*John* 1: 10. Let us make good use of every light which comes to us from the Father of lights; of the corporeal light, to admire God's works in the creation and to praise and glorify him, the Creator; of the spiritual light, to fulfil conscientiously the duties of our religion and state of life; of the supernatural light, to perfect and sanctify yourselves more from day to day.

2. With God *there is no change, nor shadow of alteration.* God is ever the same from eternity to eternity; he is the highest and most perfect good, and, consequently, unchangeable. God never changes his will; he is not as men, who frequently do not will to-morrow what they will to day: what he once wills, he always and eternally wills. God is unchangeable; let us trust to him in every circumstance of life; he does not abandon us, though all may turn from us, if we do not abandon him. God is unchangeable; let us also be unchangeable in his holy service, considering the words of the prophet: If the just man shall turn away from his justice, and shall commit iniquity . . . he shall die in his sins, and his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered."—*Ezech.* 3: 20. God is unchangeable; let us also be unchangeable towards our fellow-men; let us, in our intercourse with them, show ourselves just, merciful, kind, even though they commit faults and offend us, that we "may be children of our Father, who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."—*Matt.* 5: 45.

3. *For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures.* The apostle now appeals to Christianity as the best gift, to prove that all good gifts come from God.

(*a.*) He says: God *of his own will* has called us to Christianity and to the graces connected with it. The vocation of man to the holy faith is a pure grace, which no one can merit. But God, being all goodness and mercy, gives to all men the graces necessary for salvation; he who nevertheless perishes has no reason to complain, for his perdition has its cause either in not using the proffered graces, or in abusing them. Let us daily thank God that we are Catholics, and cling to the Church with filial affection, especially at the present time, when she has so many enemies; let us defend her rights and interests and show by a faithful performance of our religious duties the purity of our faith and morals.

(*b.*) *God hath begotten us.* The apostle means to say: God has made us new creatures, has given us the means to be spiritually regenerated. Hitherto we were ignorant of all things relating to our eternal salvation, but now we are enlightened and know the way which leads to God and to heaven; formerly we were sinners and were in the slavery of Satan, and heaven was barred against us; now we are justified and sanctified, made children of God and heirs of heaven; formerly we were impotent to do anything profitable and meritorious, now with the grace of God we are able to work out our salvation and merit heaven. The apostle in saying, *God hath begotten us*, reminds us of all these graces.

(*c.*) This important begetting or regeneration is effected *by the word of truth*, that is, by the gospel and the means of grace which are included in it. For if a man receives the gospel or the doctrine preached by Christ and his Church, with a believing heart, and lives according to it, and worthily receives the means of grace, that is, the sacraments, he is spiritually regenerated, purified and sanctified. The gospel is called the "word of truth" because it comes from God, the eternal, infallible truth, and because all that it contains, promises, or threatens, is based upon truth and is fulfilled. The word *of truth* is here placed in opposition to the word *of untruth.* The devil spoke to Eve the word of untruth, and because she believed and followed him, sin and death came upon her and her posterity; but Christ spoke to us the word of truth, and justification, life and salvation come upon all that believe in him. Therefore Christ says: "He that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever."—*John* 11: 25, 26. In our time many Catholics no longer appreciate the grace of the gospel. Some parents do not even bring their children to be baptized; some get married before the "Justice of the Peace," or even before an heretical minister, despising the Sacrament of Matrimony; there are many Catholics who never go to church, or receive the sacraments, living and dying in unbelief and disobedience. What a terrible judgment will come upon such apostate Catholics!

(*d.*) By *the beginning of his creatures*, St. James means the Jews, for these were the first that were received into the Church and were made partakers of the grace of Christianity. These Christians from Judaism he designates as the *firstlings of the creation of God*, for only those Christians who are born again of water and the Holy Ghost are pre-eminently considered creatures of God, whilst all others who are not Christians, and, consequently, not regenerated, or who are Christians, but have lost the grace of

regeneration and perish, are, as it were, no longer looked upon as creatures of God. We belong to this creation of God or to these new men who are created according to God in true holiness and justice.—*Eph.* 2: 10; 4: 24. Shortly after our birth we all received holy baptism, in which we have been spiritually regenerated and sanctified. Let us preserve the grace of baptism with the greatest care, and should we be so unfortunate as to lose it by mortal sin, let us by true repentance recover it, for we must bring it before the tribunal of God, if we wish to be saved. "Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it without stain before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life."

PART II.

To the truth, that all good gifts, especially Christianity, with all its graces and blessings, come from God, the apostle adds some lessons which we must follow.

1. *Let every man be quick to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of man worketh not the justice of God.*

(*a.*) What is it that we must be quick to hear? The word of truth, the word of God; we must hear it quickly, that is, willingly and fervently. How anxious are people for the daily papers, to hear what happens in the world, which properly does not concern us, or has influence only upon our earthly life. Why should we not hear with zeal and joy the word of God, which contains lessons and truths, upon the faithful acceptance and following of which depends our eternal salvation? We are anxious to hear about things that we like; it is therefore a good sign when we like to hear the word of God, a sign that we love the word of God and are solicitous for our salvation. What we do not love we do not like to hear; it is therefore a bad sign when we do not hear the word of God at all, or without interest, or with disgust, a sign that we do not care for God and neglect the business of our salvation. How is it with you? Do you love to hear the word of God or not? Examine yourselves, and see whether you are of God or not.

(*b.*) We must be *slow to speak.* Before we speak, we must consider calmly and conscientiously before God whether what we intend to say is right and proper; whether it is not suggested by vanity, by envy, or enmity, by falsity, or other culpable passions; whether it is necessary, useful, and prudent. Oh, how many sins, how many scandals and evils could be avoided if all would be slow to speak! In order not to sin in speaking it is necessary,

above all things, to cleanse our heart from all inordinate inclinations and passions, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (*Matt.* 12: 34) Again we must speak with deliberation and circumspection, for it frequently happens that we have reason to regret what we say inconsiderately. We must also make in the morning and frequently during the day, especially if we have an occasion to converse and speak with different persons, good resolutions to be prudent in speaking—lastly, to speak as little as possible. To keep silence, and to speak little, were characteristic traits of all the saints. Let us not forget that we must give an account of every idle word. The Apostle wishes us especially to speak of religious things with seriousness and reverence. Many take upon themselves to be masters and teachers in these things, although they do not understand anything about them. Be not guilty of this fault, and have nothing to do with people who censure and reject this or that which the Church ordains and teaches; tell them that Christ has not appointed, them teachers, but the Apostles and their successors, who should be heard, according to his words: "He that heareth you, heareth me."—*Luke* 10: 16.

(*c.*) We must *be slow to anger.* What does this mean? We must first reflect whether we have just cause for anger; for to be angry without such cause is always sinful; secondly, whether, and in how far, the thing is worthy of anger: thirdly, whether he that has offended or injured us has done or omitted something that displeases us, through inadvertency, surprise, hastiness, or awkwardness; or with deliberation, ill-will, or malice. To be slow to anger means also that we should not speak or act upon the first impulse, but recollect ourselves and then speak or act as may be necessary or desirable under the circumstances. Therefore an old philosopher gives this rule: "When angry do and say nothing until you have repeated the whole alphabet."

(*d.*) St. James assigns as a reason why we must be slow to anger, *Because the anger of man worketh not the justice of God.* How many things are done in a rage that are afterwards bitterly regretted! Example: Alexander the Great, who stabbed his best friend Klitus whilst in a passion; whereupon he almost became insane. Louis the Severe, who in a fit of anger became the murderer of his innocent wife and of several other persons, an act which caused him so much grief that the hair of his head turned grey in one night. Oh, how many sins could be avoided if people would always be slow to anger! Make good resolutions.

2. *Wherefore, casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of malice, with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

(*a.*) The Apostle exhorts Christians, being regenerated by the word of truth, and made children of God, to cast away all uncleanness and abundance of malice. By uncleanness we understand particularly all interior sins by which the heart is defiled, also all voluntary bad thoughts and desires. God looks into the heart, and if all is not in order there he is displeased with us, though our exterior conduct be blameless and praiseworthy. Therefore our Lord compares the Scribes and Pharisees to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. See particularly that your heart is well disposed; suffer no sinful inclinations to dwell there, no pride, no envy, no impurity, no uncharitableness; rejoice in virtue, hate and detest sin, and mean well with every one. If the heart be well disposed, all is well; but if otherwise, all is wrong, even the most beautiful virtues and the most heroic actions are but hypocrisy and without value before God. By *abundance of malice* we understand every outward sin committed in word or action, especially all sins against Christian meekness. If the seed of weeds is in a field it will spring up, and bring, not wheat, but cockle, for the plants have always the nature of the seed. It is the same in the human heart. The evil inclinations and passions prevalent in it are the seed that bring forth sins and vices, wherefore Christ says: "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies."—*Matt.* 15: 19.

Lastly, the apostle exhorts us to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls. This word is the word of God. St. James calls this word *engrafted*, because men have it not of themselves, but it is communicated to them by Christ, and it is continually communicatod by his Church. The apostle chooses the expression *engrafted*, to indicate that the word of God, as Christ himself says, is to work in us as the seed which is sowed in good ground and brings forth abundant fruit. We must receive the word of God with meekness. Meekness means interior calmness, a heart which is free from immoderate cares, sinful desires and passions. Immoderate cares, sinful desires, and the passions are the thorns which choke the seed of the word of God, so that it cannot grow and bring forth fruit. If we receive the word of God with a perfectly tranquil, believing heart, and with a pious mind, regulating our life according to it, it will save our souls, it will make us holy and pleasing to God and will therefore lead us to salvation.

PERORATION.

Follow the lessons which St. James gives you in the epistle of this day. Love to hear the word of God, which is preached to you; this word is of the greatest importance, because it shows you the way you must go to please God and to obtain your final reward. Be circumspect in speaking; consider always beforehand whether that which you intend to say is right, so that you may never have reason to regret having spoken. Think twice before you speak once. Never act in the first impulse of passion or anger, so that you may not transgress the limits of reason, and thereby sin. Cleanse your heart from all inordinate inclinations, and lead a pious and blameless life before God and man, in order that you may show yourselves worthy of the graces and benefits which so abundantly flow to you from the hand of God, and thus work out your salvation. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL. *John* 16: 5-14. At that time Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filleth your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believed not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come, he shall show you. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE DEPARTURE OF CHRIST TO HIS FATHER, AND THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

We celebrate to-day the fourth Sunday after Easter, and within three weeks we shall keep two great festivals—the *Ascension,* and *Pentecost.* The Church reminds us of these feasts to-day, so that we may prepare ourselves properly for them. For this reason she reads to us a portion of the farewell discourse of Christ, in which he speaks of his departure to the Father and of the coming of the Holy Ghost. Let us make a short meditation on the gospel of this day. As I have already indicated, it treats—

I. Of the departure of Christ to his Father;
II. Of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

PART I.

1. *Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

(*a.*) When Christ says that he goes to him that sent him, he speaks, first of all, of his Ascension. He does not mention his passion and death, which preceded his Ascension. Why does he do this? Undoubtedly to assuage the sorrow which his departure would cause them. Loving him affectionately, they had every reason to console themselves for his departure, besause he exchanged this painful earthly life for the felicity of heaven. In like manner we have no reason to mourn at the departure of our friends, if they have lived piously and entitled us to hope that they have made a good end. For this reason the early Christians celebrated the death-day of the holy martyrs, not as a day of mourning, but as a day of joy. We are not doing wrong when we pay tribute to nature by mourning over the death of dear friends. It should, however, be done with moderation and resignation to the will of God, wherefore the Apostle exhorts us not to be sorrowful concerning them that are asleep, as those who have no hope.—*I. Thess.* 4: 12. Parents, particularly, should not grieve immoderately when a child, even if it be their only one, is taken away from them by death, remembering the words of the wise man: "He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul, for the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupis-

cence overturneth the innocent mind. Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled in a long time: for his soul pleased God, therefore he hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities." —*Wisd.* 4: 11-14.

(*b.*) Christ does not find fault with the Apostles for not asking him—*Whither goest thou?*—but for becoming sorrowful as often as he spoke of his departure. Many Christians who in calamities and tribulations become sad and dejected deserve the same rebuke, whereas their faith tells them, "that to them that love God, all things work together unto good" (*Rom.* 8: 28), and that sufferings and tribulations are very profitable to us by detaching our hearts from earthly things, by infusing into our souls a desire for the eternal goods, and by affording us an opportunity for the practice of various virtues and the increase of our merits for heaven. Being wanderers upon earth, and not having a lasting city here, it is natural for us to ask ourselves the question: *Whither goest thou?* Whither do you go with the body? Into the grave, into which neither money nor lands, neither honor nor reputation, neither joy nor pleasure, will follow you, in which your body will fall into dust, hereafter rising again, either for eternal joy or eternal torments. Reflect seriously on this—Whither goest thou with thy soul? To judgment, and thence either to heaven or hell. Both will last for ever. What an infinitely important step! And many of us are indifferent about this step, which perhaps we shall be obliged soon to make. Is not this a most culpable negligence? If you go to work, to rest, to your meals, to an enjoyment, to prayer, to confession, ask yourselves the question, Whither goest thou?—and at every step have God before your eyes, that you may do all things well.

2. ***But I tell you the truth: It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.***

(*a.*) Why does Christ assure his Apostles that it was expedient to them that he should go? First of all, because by his going to the Father he accomplished the work of our Redemption. If he had not died on the cross and ascended into heaven, we should not be redeemed from sin and eternal damnation, and heaven would be barred against us. But the going of Christ was especially expedient for the Apostles. They, like the rest, had an erroneous opinion of the Messias and his mission; they thought that he would establish a temporal kingdom, and make the Jews the mightiest and most prosperous nation on the earth. By separating himself from them it became evident that his kingdom was not of this world, and that the work of Redemption referred,

not to temporal evils, but to sin and damnation. To this must be added, that the faith of the Apostles was still weak, and their love entirely human and sensual. Only after Christ had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, was their faith to become immovable and their love pure and spiritual. Lastly, as long as Christ was with them they depended wholly on him and did nothing of any importance; but when he was no longer in their midst, they worked with indefatigable zeal for the conversion of the world. Therefore what the Apostles considered an evil was in reality a blessing to them.

Why do we frequently think that to be useful which is really injurious, and that to be injurious which is truly useful? Because we are short-sighted and do not know the good or the bad consequences which may result from it. Witnesses: Joseph in Egypt. That he was sold into Egypt and then cast into prison, was, according to human judgment, something terrible, but in reality it was a blessing for him, his family and all Egypt.—*Gen.* 41. Rachel, Jacob's wife, deemed herself most unhappy because she was barren, and thought she would die of grief unless she became a mother, but she died in travail at her second delivery.—*Gen.* 35. Witness Dives and poor Lazarus. Let us consider that what God does is always good and salutary, though it may sometimes appear repugnant and displeasing to our sensual nature, and let us in good as well as in evil days say: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

(*b.*) Our Lord makes the coming of the Holy Ghost depend on his departure, chiefly because the mission of the Holy Ghost and his graces are a fruit of the passion of Christ. He had to accomplish the work of our Redemption by his passion and death before the Holy Ghost could come and apply the merits of this work to men for their sanctification. It was, moreover, not becoming that the members should be crowned before the head, that is, that men should be filled with the Holy Ghost before Christ, who had merited this grace for them, had entered into his glory. Lastly, the Apostles were still too earthly-minded, and therefore not fit to receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost; this could be the case only after the departure of Christ, when they began to love their Lord and Master with a more spiritual love.

Here we see again that the greatest blessings are frequently attached to great trials and sufferings. Thus the saints arrived, through various trials, at a higher degree of Christian perfection and to a contemplative life. Mortification and the patient endurance of afflictions and difficulties are the most necessary means for obtaining eternal salvation. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 24. "Whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come

after me, cannot be my disciple."—*Luke* 14: 27. There is but one heaven, and that is not here, but hereafter. He who seeks and finds it here will lose it hereafter.

PART II.

Our Lord speaks of the coming of the Holy Ghost and of the effects which he will produce.

1. *When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in me. And of justice, because I go to the Father, and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged.*

(*a.*) By *the world*, which the Holy Ghost will convince, are to be understood, first, the Jews and then all mankind. The *sin* of which the Holy Ghost will convince the world, is *unbelief*, because it is the origin of evil, and the source of all sins. The Holy Ghost convinces the world of sin through the gospel which the Apostles and their successors preach; through the holiness of their lives and the miracles which they work he brings men to the knowledge of the grievousness of their sin in not believing in Christ. The Holy Ghost effected this conviction on the feast of Pentecost, when, at the sermon of St. Peter, three thousand Jews were converted; and he continues to effect it to the end of time, through the Catholic Church, which unceasingly announces the Christian doctrine, proving its truth and divinity by countless miracles.

(*b.*) *The Holy Ghost will convince the world of justice*, i. e., the Holy Ghost will convince the people that I was just and that all who believe in me are brought to justice. The Holy Ghost again effected this conviction by the gospel which the Apostles and their successors preached, by the great miracles with which the preaching of that same gospel was accompanied at all times, and by the holiness to which the gospel leads all who receive it with a believing heart, and make it the rule of their lives. Let us, then, do "what may be good not only before God, but also before men" (*II. Cor.* 8: 21); for this is one of the most effectual means of convincing the world of the divinity of Christianity and of the justice of Christ.

(*c.*) When Christ says that the Holy Ghost will convince the world of judgment, it meant that the Holy Ghost will convince men by his wonderful effects, viz., the power of Satan broken, his kingdom destroyed, and he and his associates delivered to

eternal damnation. The Apostles and their successors by the invocation of the holy Name of Jesus expelled the evil spirits from the pagan temples, from the bodies and the hearts of men, destroyed the kingdom of the devil, and established everywhere the kingdom of God. We are also redeemed from the slavery of the devil and called to the liberty of the children of God. Let us avoid sin, in which we had the misfortune to be born, so that we may not relapse into his slavery.

2. *I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine and shall show it to you.*

(*a.*) Christ tells his Apostles that he had yet many things to say to them, but that in consequence of their not being able to bear the recital of all his truths and to comprehend them all at once, he was obliged to keep silence with regard to them, and would not broach them now, but he refers them directly to the Holy Ghost, who would come down upon them and teach them all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them. By the truth here spoken of we are to understand, not natural, but supernatural truths, truths concerning God, the Church, and the salvation of men. It was not necessary that they should be men learned in wordly things, versed in natural and scientific truths, but spiritual men knowing everything pertaining to and necessary for their own sanctification, as well as for that of others, and for their vocation as preachers of the divine word. Speaking of natural and scientific truths, it is a remarkable fact in the history of the Church that the successors of the Apostles never treated them in such a way as to error bring themselves into disrepute. The progress of literature and natural science formed one of the principal objects of their constant attention. Many of the Popes were, as Protestant historians admit, the most learned men of the times in which they lived, and by encouraging the genius of others in eloquence and poetry, art and science, have deserved well of mankind. But it was in the sublime heights of supernatural science that they received from the Holy Ghost the light necessary to know and rightly to conceive the entire doctrine of Christ, and were preserved from all error in the preaching of it, being enabled fully to develop the truths and lessons which Christ had only indicated, to discover all errors, and infallibly to define what men must believe and do, in order to be saved.

Such a teacher of truth was the Holy Ghost, not only to the Apostles, but also to their successors, the bishops in union with the Pope; constituting what we call the teaching Church. This teaching Church enjoys the constant assistance of the Holy Ghost, and is therefore as infallible in matters of Christian faith and morals as were the Apostles themselves. We are therefore strictly bound to subject ourselves with heart and mind to the ordinances of the teaching Church. If we refuse to do so, the words of Christ apply to us: "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17.

(*b.*) Christ had declared (*John* 7: 16) that the doctrine he preached was not his, but the doctrine of Him who sent him. In the same sense the words of Christ are to be understood, viz., that the Holy Ghost *shall not speak of himself, but what things soever he shall hear he shall speak.* The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is sent by both. The doctrine which he brings is properly not his own, but that of the Son, which again is the doctrine of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, receives his essence and doctrine from the Father and the Son. Whatever Christ preached whilst sojourning on earth, the Holy Ghost continues to teach to the end of time. Our faith, therefore, originates from the Most Holy Trinity. What the Father has taught, his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, has revealed to men; and what Christ has revealed, the Holy Ghost continues to teach by the mouth of the Church, with whom he remains to the end of time. Thus God has made provision in order that the people of all times may come to the knowledge of the truth, and work out their salvation. How happy must we deem ourselves that we are within the pale of the Catholic Church, from which we receive everything that is required for our purification, sanctification and salvation.

PERORATION.

Let us thank God for this grace and employ it for the salvation of our souls. Let us frequently ask ourselves the question, *Whither goest thou?*—and never lose sight of our eternal end. Let us serve God with fervor and perseverance, so that we may be able to say at the end of our life: *I go to him who sent me.* Let us employ these three weeks before Pentecost in preparing for that festival. And since the Holy Ghost does not enter into a heart defiled by sin, let us shun every sin, especially *pride, impurity and uncharitableness;* let us practice interior solitude and prayer, so that the Holy Ghost may come and communicate his graces to us. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you.—*John* 16:7.

In the gospel of this day our Lord assigns the reason why his departure would be expedient for his disciples, for on it would depend the coming of the Holy Ghost. But why could not the Holy Ghost come before the departure of Christ? Because the work of Redemption was not yet accomplished. It was necesary that Jesus should first redeem men by his death and then the Holy Ghost would come down and apply to them the fruits of Redemption. Thus what grieved the Apostles most was to them the greatest blessing: for the departure of Christ brought to them and to all mankind the Holy Ghost and with him the grace of sanctification. It is so to-day. In our short-sightedness we frequently regard something as a great evil, lament, mourn and weep, but this imaginary misfortune brings us, as we afterwards find out ourselves, many benefits and blessings. We must place all our hope and confidence in our Lord and expect from him all that is expedient and salutary for time and eternity. To this I will encourage you to-day by speaking of Christian hope.

I. Its glorious effects;
II. The sins against it.

PART I.

The effects of Christian hope are glorious, for—

1. *It strengthens us in temptation.* Our life here is a warfare; we are obliged to fight with interior and exterior enemies, with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The exertions of these, our bitterest enemies, are indefatigable and aim at nothing less than our eternal perdition. At the same time, we are weak ourselves, and of our own strength are not able to resist their temptations. We are like a reed which bends to the ground with the wind that veers and blows from all quarters. What can bear us up in these struggles and dangers to salvation, so that we may not lose courage, and in the knowledge of our weakness conclude

an ignominious peace with our enemies? Nothing but *hope;* it holds us fast, as the anchor does the ship in the storm, that we may not waver; it points to the grace which is strong in the weak, so that we may say with the Apostle: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* 4: 13. Firmly trusting in assistance from above, we fear no enemy, dread no danger; as children for whose protection the arm of the Father is raised, we feel courage, and fight with perseverance for the salvation of our soul.

2. *It nourishes in us the heavenly spirit.* Faith teaches us that the earth is only our temporary abode, in which, as in an educational institute, we are to prepare ourselves for a better life. Hope continually points to this destiny and encourages us to disregard temporal things and to long for the eternal. We do not however give up our temporal vocation; we fulfil the duties of our state of life with conscientious fidelity and care for the necessaries of life; we have no inordinate love for anything earthly, but share the thoughts of the Apostle, saying: "The time is short; it remaineth, that they also who have wives be as if they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not, and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not, and they that buy, as though they possessed not, and they that use the world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away."—*I. Cor.* 7: 29-31. How differently do those think and act in whom Christian hope is wanting. As they expect no better goods hereafter, their hearts and affections are set upon the things of this world, they have no other desire than to have a good time here; they give full scope to their passions and dread no vice, if it appears necessary to them for the gratification of their base desires and the accomplishment of their wicked designs.

3. *It enlivens in us the zeal for virtue.* Hope is to man what horses are to the wagon, steam to the engine, or the pendulum to the clock. It is his great motive power, it urges and impels him on to put his hand to the work and to dread no exertion to the object of his desire. It was thus that Jacob served Laban fourteen years, in order to obtain Rachel for a wife. What do not men do in the various avocations of life, *e. g.*, the farmer, the soldier, the merchant, the scholar, to realize their hopes? Now if temporal hope exercises so wonderful a power over man, what will not heavenly hope achieve? What sacrifice will become too difficult to the Christian when he looks at the immense reward which God holds out to him in heaven! Examples: St. Paul, who, in the preaching of the gospel, took upon himself so many persecutions and sufferings because he hoped to acquire heaven by them.—*I. Cor.* 9: 23. St. Francis Xavier, who encouraged himself

with the words: "Sweat for your Lord. He will hereafter wipe your brow and not deprive you of the promised reward." The martyrs, hermits, monks, etc. Let us think frequently of heaven, which God has promised to his faithful servants, that we may preserve Christian fervor and not grow weary of leading a virtuous life.

4. *It consoles us in sufferings and makes us bear them not only patiently, but also with joy.* "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 11, 12. According to these words of Christ, the Apostles were to endure all sufferings and persecutions with joy in prospect of the great reward which was awaiting them in heaven. So they did.—*Acts* 5: 41. St. Paul consoles himself and the faithful in tribulations and persecutions with the hope of a reward hereafter. He says: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."—*II. Cor.* 4: 8-10. And shortly afterwards: "We know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven."—*II. Cor.* 5: 1. It was hope that sustained pious Job in the days of the hardest trial. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God."—*Job.* 19: 25-27. It was hope that crowned the Christian martyrs, gave the palm to the virgins, and infused courage into the confessors; it was hope that fortified all pious Christians with strength to bear with joy and constancy the various tribulations of life. Why should not we cheerfully pass a short time in this valley of tears amidst sufferings and hardships, remembering the certain hope which we have of heaven?

5. *Lastly, it sweetens death.* The hour of death is indeed ineffably bitter to the wicked man because of his hopeless state. "When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more."—*Prov.* 11: 7. But the just man expects his last hour with consolation and calmness; he even longs for death, and says with the Apostle: "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."—*Phil.* 1: 23. Hope renders death easy and desirable to him, for he can say to himself: Only a little while, and I shall see my God, the only object of my desire and love; I shall possess him for ever. How did the cup-bearer of Pharaoh rejoice when he heard from Joseph that he would soon be delivered from

prison and reinstated in the service of the king! Should not my soul, which loves God so much, rejoice when she hears that she will soon exchange the prison of this earth for the enjoyments of heaven?

PART II.

We sin against hope by hoping either *too little or too much.*

1. *We hope too little if we despair of our salvation.* Despair is the giving up of all hope. It has reference—

(*a.*) *Either to the person himself, who is to hope.* God wills the salvation of all men; therefore he gives to all men the grace necessary to work out their salvation. We must absolutely not doubt this truth of our faith. Now, if we accept and make use of this proffered grace, we must be saved. The thought whether we shall make use of this grace or not, and persevere to the end, may suggest some fear. This fear is not wrong, but salutary, because it preserves us from tepidity, and urges us diligently to employ this grace in the practice of virtue. But if we obstinately assert that all graces are unprofitable to us because we could not co-operate with them or persevere to the end in good, we should make ourselves guilty of the sin of despair. In this case the despair would refer to ourselves, because we believed that we could not work out our salvation by the aid of grace.

(*b.*) *Or to that which we are to hope for.* The object of our hope is heaven and whatever is necessary to it, namely, the forgiveness of sins and divine grace. He therefore, who for whatever reason gives up all hope of being saved, despairs. He despairs who no longer hopes for the forgiveness of his sins. Examples: Cain and Judas, who believed their sins to be greater than God could forgive. How foolish and impious! Can the greatness and multitude of sins make void God's power, goodness and fidelity? Does not the Sacred Scripture assure us many times that God is ready to pardon all penitent sinners, no matter how much and how grievously they may have sinned? and have we not numerous instances of the greatest sinners finding mercy and pardon? Many despair also of divine grace. Among these may be numbered those who no longer make use of the means of grace, pray no more and cease to receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, imagining that they are already lost, that therefore no means of grace can be of any benefit to them. These unfortunates disregard entirely the words of the Apostle: "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound."—*Rom.* 5: 20.

(*c.*) *Or to God, from whom we must hope.* This is the case when a person believes that God can not or will not forgive him any more; that he has already rejected him. Such a one sins, not only against hope, but also against faith, because he denies the omnipotence and goodness of God. Despair is one of the most grievous sins and leads to impenitence and frequently to suicide.

2. *We hope too little—*

If we do not hope with confidence that which we are to hope from God. This is *diffidence*, which lies *between hope and despair;* for whilst despair is the giving up of all hope, diffidence is a wavering hope. Diffidence may be sinful or not sinful.

(*a.*) When the diffidence relates to God, that is, when a person doubts whether God will forgive him his sins, or give him the grace necessary for salvation, it is sinful: for by such doubts an injury is offered to God, for he has assured us of eternal salvation and the means of obtaining it. If a truthful man feels himself offended when no credit is given to his word, how much more God, who is the eternal, infallible truth. How displeasing to God such an imperfect confidence is we see in the Israelites in the desert.—*Ex.* 16, and *Numb.* 20.

(*b.*) If the diffidence does not refer to God, but to ourselves, that is, if we feel a certain disquietude because we fear that we might not employ the grace of God for our salvation or persevere to the end, it is not a sin, because we must not trust in ourselves. This diffidence is good and salutary in itself, because it is founded on humility and induces us to be watchful, to persevere in prayer, and, in general to employ diligently the means of grace.

3. *We hope too much—*

(1.) *If we hope presumptuously*, that is, when we take occasion from the divine mercy to sin and to persevere in sin. Such presumptuous sinners think: God is infinitely merciful, I may sin on and on as much as I please, for he pardons me a hundred or more sins as easily as one. It is not necessary now to repent, since he is ready at all times to forgive, as the example of the thief on the cross proves; God does not make much of a sin, and it is impossible for his fatherly goodness to condemn for ever a person who by nature is so much inclined to evil. Such presumption is a shameful abuse of the goodness and longanimity of God and therefore *very sinful.* God is merciful to the penitent, but not to the impenitent. To those who heedlessly persevere in sin, pre-

suming on God's mercy, the words apply: "Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared."—*Prov.* 1: 24-26.

(2.) *If we put a false trust in God,* by hoping for something from him in any other way than that in which he is willing to grant it.

(*a.*) Owing to their false confidence all those sin who, without using ordinary and natural means, expect to obtain from God what they ask for by a miracle, or in some other extraordinary manner. Example: A man who is dangerously ill refuses to send for a physician, or to take the prescribed medicine, saying: "I expect God to cure me, and I will hope in him."

(*b.*) Those who without necessity expose themselves to danger of body or soul and expect that God will defend them from danger by extraordinary means. To this class belong those who are not determined to shun the proximate occasion of sin.

(*c.*) Those who hope for the forgiveness of sin without being willing to forsake sin. They confess without contrition and a firm resolution of amendment, and cannot resolve to give up their sinful company, to restore ill-gotten goods, to break off their bad habits; nevertheless they trust in their confessions, and think that God would forgive them their sins if they only could find a confessor who would absolve them. They delude themselves to their own eternal perdition. The same may be said of those who put their confidence in certain devotions and prayers, pilgrimages and blessed things, and believe that they will procure for them a happy death, without an amendment of life. These things are good and salutary, but they have not the virtue of saving an impenitent sinner.

PERORATION.

You know now the sins *against hope.* Beware of them. Never allow a single thought of diffidence or despair to arise in your hearts. Be convinced that God does everything to save you, and that there is no possible case in which man cannot work out his salvation. *Beware of presumption and false confidence.* God indeed wills all men to be saved, but only on condition that they love him, and keep his commandments. Away, then, with all levity and presumption; "trust in God and do right," employ his grace for the acquisition of virtue, and serve him faithfully all the days of your

lives. Only in such a way will your hope rest on a solid basis; you will obtain what you hope for—the forgiveness of your sins here, and life everlasting hereafter. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE FEASTS OCCURRING IN PASCHAL TIME.

Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart.—John 16: 6.

The Apostles became sorrowful whenever Christ spoke of his departure. And yet it was not only expedient, but also necessary, that he should go; for according to the decree of the Blessed Trinity the work of our Redemption could not be accomplished except by the passion and death of Jesus Christ. But as it was necessary that he should suffer and die in order to redeem us, so we can become partakers of the fruits of Redemption only through sufferings. Hence, the Apostle says: "If (we are) sons (of God, we are) heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."—*Rom.* 8: 17. To this truth the Church turns our attention at the present time; for she celebrates several feasts of our Lord, which refer to the passion of Christ, namely, the *Finding of the Cross*, the *Crown of Thorns* and the *Spear and Nails* [in the United States the two latter are kept in Lent]. All these feasts are an admonition to us to follow our divine Saviour on the way of the cross, if we wish to follow him into everlasting glory. The same truth is taught by the feasts of the saints which the Church celebrates in Paschal time, and of which I intend to speak to you to-day.

I. The patronage of St. Joseph;
II. The feast of St. Mark;
III. The feast of SS. Philip and James;
IV. The feast of St. John before the Latin Gate.

PART I.

The Church celebrates two feasts of St. Joseph, the first, simply called the *feast of St. Joseph*, on the 19th of March; the second,

called the *Patronage of St. Joseph*, on the third Sunday after Easter. Both feasts are distinct from each other; in the first we venerate St. Joseph on account of his earthly dignity as the protector of Mary's virginity and the foster-father of Jesus; but in the second on account of his heavenly dignity as Patron of the Universal Church.

As Patron of the Church St. Joseph appears—

1. *In the canonical hours.* The Church in her canonical hours applies to the foster-father of Jesus what is said of Joseph of Egypt.—*Gen.* 30. As Joseph was placed in charge of Putiphar's house, and afterwards by the command of Pharaoh was made ruler over all Egypt, so St. Joseph has always been venerated in the Church. Benedict XIV. established the feast of the Patronage and Pius IX. declared him to be the Patron of the Universal Church. And as Joseph of Egypt was a blessing to Putiphar's house, and in the land of Egypt saved millions of people from starvation and death, so St. Joseph is a source of blessing for all Christendom, by averting countles evils from it, and by obtaining graces of every kind for it.

2. *In the mass of the feast.* The epistle contains the passage in which Jacob blesses his son Joseph and designates him the shepherd and foundation-stone of Israel.—*Gen.* 49: 24. The Church thereby indicates that God made St. Joseph the shepherd and foundation-stone of the faithful and appointed him to succor us in our needs and to defend us from our enemies. *The gospel of the feast* treats of the miracle at the baptism of Christ, when the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and his heavenly Father declared him to be his well-beloved Son; and it adds, that he was (as it was supposed) the Son of Joseph. —*Luke* 3: 21-23. By these last words the Church indicates the dignity of St. Joseph, in whose protection we must place our fullest confidence, since he was the foster-father of Jesus.

Application. We must have great confidence in the protection of St. Joseph; for if all the saints avail much by their intercession with God, this holds good especially with regard to St. Joseph, who, in his earthly life, stood in a more intimate relation with Christ than they. Why should he not hear the prayer of his foster-father, who made so many sacrifices for him, and provided for him with a father's care? St. Thomas of Aquin says of him: "Some saints have the power from God to succor us in some particular cases, but it is granted to St. Joseph to assist us in every necessity." St- Teresa says: "I took for my advocate and master the glorious St. Joseph, and I always recommended

myself to him. I cannot remember having asked him for anything which I did not obtain." Let us not omit to recommend ourselves daily to the protection of St. Joseph, and to invoke his intercession in all our necessities. But let us also be anxious to render ourselves worthy of his patronage by imitating him in his humility, patience, obedience, and in the performance of our duties, and by serving God in prosperity as well as in adversity.

PART II.

1. St. Mark was the son of a certain Mary of Jerusalem, in whose house the Apostles frequently assembled. He was instructed in Christianity by St. Peter; for he calls him his son. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their apostolic journeys. By the advice of St. Peter he wrote his gospel. The theatre of his mission was Africa where St. Peter made him bishop of Alexandria. The idolatrous priests, in their bitter hatred, swore vengeance because he converted many heathens. The mob, instigated by them, fell upon him, bound him with ropes, and dragged him through the city for a whole day; the streets were stained with his blood, and pieces of his flesh adhered to the stones. In the evening he was cast into prison, where an angel appeared to him saying: "Mark, thy name is in the book of life, and thy memory shall never be blotted out." Thus writes Venerable Bede. On the following day they dragged him again through the streets till he died. This occurred on the 25th day of April, 68.

The Church celebrates the feast of St. Mark every year on April 25th, and she directs public processions to be made on this day.

Application. God assured St. Mark through an angel that his name was written in the book of life. We have no such assurance. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred."—*Eccltes.* 9: 1. And having no certainty whether we are in the state of grace and shall persevere in it, we must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling."—*Phil.* 2: 12. However if, with St. Mark, we always serve God faithfully, walk in humility and pray continually, we may confidently hope to be saved.

2. On the feast of St. Mark rogations take place, which are called the major rogations or Litanies. The word *rogation* is of Latin derivation, and means a petition, a prayer. A litany, originally meant a prayer alternately recited. In the course of time this word was transferred to rogation, so that, in the language of the Church *litany* and *rogation* are synonymous. The rogations of St. Mark's day are called the major rogations or litanies, because

from the beginning they were held with greater solemnity than the rogations in Rogation Week.

These rogations on the feast of St. Mark are of very ancient date, for they can be traced back to St. Gregory the Great, who introduced them in the year 590. They have for their object to beg God in the spirit of humility and penance to graciously protect us from all those evils with which nature threatens us. For, on account of the sins by which we have desecrated it, nature is in opposition to us, and causes us many injuries. God being the Lord of nature, we supplicate him by united prayer to avert from us everything dangerous to our person and property.

Part III.

1. The feast of *SS. Philip and James, Apostles,* is celebrated on May 1st. Philip, born at Bethsaida, was a fisherman and married. When our Lord called him, he followed him at once, and also endeavored to make others partake of this grace. The first that was brought by him to Christ was his friend Nathanael. After the descent of the Holy Ghost he went to Phrygia, where he lived to a very advanced age, and was crucified in the year 81. His body afterwards was brought to Rome, where it now rests in the Church built in 560 in honor of himself and St. James.

Application. This holy apostle gives us a beautiful example of gaining souls for Christ. He dedicated his whole life to this work and deemed himself happy to die as a disciple of our Lord. Follow him. Not only serve God with all fervor, but be solicitous for others to serve him. Christian charity obliges you to this. If you are instrumental in making others lead a pious, penitential life, you do a work very pleasing to God, for which he will reward you hereafter, for "they that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."—*Dan.* 12: 3. Guard against giving scandal, that the terrible woe which Christ pronounces upon those who do so may not be inflicted upon you.

2. St. James, whose feast is celebrated together with that of St. Philip, was a son of Alpheus and Mary, and as his mother was an aunt of the Blessed Virgin, he was a near relation of our Blessed Lord, and hence, in the language of the Hebrews, he was called a brother of the Lord.

He was surnamed *the Less,* in contradistinction to the other apostle James, who was the son of Zebedee, and a brother of St. John, the Evangelist. James, the son of Zebedee, was called *the Greater,* probably because he was older than the son of Alpheus. A rivalry sprang up between the mothers, as they were anxious to see which of their sons would attain power and dignity. James

and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also related to our Divine Lord, for their mother was a cousin of the Blessed Virgin. We read in the tenth chapter of St. Mark that James and John, instigated probably by their mother, came to our Lord, and said to him: "Master we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, thou wouldst do it for us." But He said to them: "What would you that I should do for you?" And they said: "Grant to us, that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." And he said to them: "You know not what you ask." Whilst all the other Apostles went abroad to preach the gospel to the nations, St. James *the Less* remained at Jerusalem, and labored there as its first bishop. He wrote the Catholic or Universal Epistle, in which, among other things he exhorts the Christians to manifest their faith by good works, in their sickness to receive Extreme Unction, and to confess their sins. He was cast from the pinnacle of the temple and killed in the year 62.

Application. St. James writes in his epistle: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."—1: 22. You would greatly deceive yourselves should you think that it is enough to hear the word of God, "for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."—*Rom.* 2: 13. Nay, the word of God, which you hear, but do not follow, will increase your guilt, for Jesus says: "That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and hath not prepared, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Resolve to regulate your life according to the word of God, that you may be of the number of those of whom Christ says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, *and keep it.*"—*Luke* 11: 28.

PART IV.

St. John before the Latin Gate is no other than St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, whose feast is celebrated on December 27th. On the 6th day of May the Church celebrates a second feast of this Saint, in memory of the tortures which he endured for the faith. The addition, *before the Latin Gate*, points to the place where John endured the torture. In his ninety-fifth year he was brought from Ephesus to Rome, where Domitian ordered him to be thrown into a caldron filled with boiling oil. By a miracle the boiling oil became for John, as it were, a refreshing bath, from which he came forth stronger than he was when he went into it. The emperor then banished him to the island of Patmos. During his exile he wrote the Apocalypse, and at Ephesus ended his holy life by a peaceful death.

Application. Among all the Apostles there was none whom Jesus loved more than St. John, wherefore he called himself *the*

disciple whom Jesus loved.—*John* 21: 20. If we ask for the reason of this particular love of Jesus for John, we find it in this, that John loved his Lord more than the other Apostles did. All his thoughts and desires were directed solely to Jesus—in his heart there was room only for Jesus.

PERORATION.

In conclusion I also exhort you to love Jesus. Love him above all things, with a love that is prepared to make any sacrifice and to renounce everything which displeases him, and do every thing which he enjoins upon you as a duty. If you love Jesus in such a manner, his words will be verified in you: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor.* 2: 9.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

OUR DIGNITY AND DUTIES AS AMBASSADORS OF GOD.

I go to him that sent me.—*John* 16: 5.

God the Father in his infinite love and mercy sent his only-begotten Son into the world to redeem and save us. Hence the Apostle writes: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that he might redeem them who were under the law."—*Gal.* 4: 4, 5. Christ being about to accomplish our Redemption by his sufferings and death on the cross, and to return to his heavenly Father said: *I go to him that sent me.* We also are sent by God. God, our Lord and Creator, sent us into the world, that we may serve him, and afterwards go to him in heaven. If with persevering fervor we live up to our destiny and do the will of God in all things, we shall be admitted into the heavenly country. Let us make a short meditation to-day on the truth that we are ambassadors of God, and consider—

I Our dignity;
II Our duties as ambassadors of God

PART I.

All emperors and kings have ambassadors accredited to foreign courts, through whom they are represented, and the affairs of their subjects transacted. These ambassadors enjoy an exalted dignity. This is evident—

1. *From the position they hold.* They are the representatives of their sovereigns; the honor given to them, as well as an offense offered to them, redounds to their sovereign. As ambassadors of God, we have a more exalted dignity than any ambassador on earth, since in comparison with God all earthly potentates are a mere nothing. If we consider the infinite majesty of God, we may say that the poorest man that walks in rags through our streets occupies a higher rank than the ambassador of the mightiest autocrat. This, our high dignity, we must respect—

(*a.*) *In ourselves,* and therefore shun everything incompatible with it. An earthly ambassador is mindful of his high position, and behaves consistently with his dignity. The thought: I am an ambassador, I represent the person of my emperor, my king, is always present to his mind and keeps him from everything that is not becoming in such a high personage. Being the ambassadors of God we must carefully shun whatever is incompatible with our dignity. How contemptible an earthly ambassador would appear if he were to roll about the street in a drunken state, quarreling with every one and making a dreadful disturbance! The people would point him out with the finger of scorn, and refuse him all respect; and his sovereign, insulted through him, would be obliged to depose him from his position. Know, my Christian friend, that you act contemptibly, if, unmindful of your dignity, you give way to your odious passions. You dishonor God, whose ambassadors you are, and compel him, on account of the insult which you offer him, to deprive you of your dignity, and to condemn you to eternal perdition. Let us never forget who we are, and in every temptation say to ourselves: I must not, and I will not, do this; it would disgrace me, an ambassador of God.

(*b.*) *In our fellow-men.* Every man, be he rich or poor, high or low, learned or ignorant, a just man or a sinner, is an ambassador of God, and as such possesses a high dignity. Hence it follows that we must despise neither the poorest person nor the greatest sinner. He who abuses or offends an ambassador, abuses or offends the sovereign whose person he represents; in like manner an offense against any man is an offense against God,

because every man is an ambassador of God. How much then do those Christian sin, who proud of their real or imaginary prerogatives, look upon others with contempt; who abuse their neighbors, despise or rob them of their honor and good name? The words of Christ apply to them: "As long you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."—*Matt.* 25: 40. Consider this well, and beware of despising or offending any one; on the contrary, you must "honor all men" (*I. Peter* 2: 17), "with honor preventing one another."—*Rom.* 12: 10.

2. *From the privileges which they possess.*

(*a.*) *They are not subject to the laws of the land in which they reside as ambassadors*, and therefore cannot, if they violate a law, be called to an account and punished. Even if they should make themselves guilty of a common crime, such as theft, robbery, etc., they could not be arrested and judged; in such a case their sovereign, having first been apprised of their crime, would depose them from their exalted position, and they would be sent out of the country. This privilege from arrest is granted to ambassadors out of respect to their princes.

We Christians enjoy a similar prerogative as ambassadors of God. We are exempt from the ceremonial law, to which the Jews, the chosen people of God, were subject. This law was hard to be fulfilled, for it referred to many points and provided strictly for the most minute things; for instance, the law forbidding many articles of food, the law of purifications, circumcision, etc.; hence St. Peter calls it a yoke which could not be borne—*Acts* 15: 10. Instead of this hard law, which was given for servants, we have the law of Christ, which he himself calls a sweet yoke and a light burden, and of which he says that it brings rest to the soul.—*Matt.* 11: 29, 30. In a certain sense we may say that we have no law at all, for we have become children of God, through Jesus Christ; and as, properly speaking, there is no law for children, since they do the will of their parents with the greatest alacrity, so the Christian whose heart is ruled by the love of God, observes his commandments with a holy joy, and would feel miserable if he were not allowed to keep them. Hence the Apostle (*Rom.* 13: 10) calls love the fulfilling of the law, and St. Augustine says: "Love, and do what you please."

(*b.*) They are free from all taxes, which all the other inhabitants of the land must pay. He who immigrates into a foreign country and lives there, must bear all the burdens of the natives. Not so ambassadors; no tribute or taxes are demanded of them;

they enjoy all the rights of the subjects of the country without being obliged to bear their burdens.

But we as ambassadors of God have still greater privileges. Christ has redeemed us from sin, from the servitude of Satan, and from eternal damnation,—and this great good, this inestimable grace, Christ has acquired for us gratuitously. He himself paid the ransom, and the price is his precious blood, as St. Peter says: "You were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." Christ has reconciled us with God, and made us children of God and heirs of heaven—and what has this grace cost us? Nothing. "All have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—*Rom.* 3: 23, 24. And what does God require of us for cleansing and sanctifying us in the holy sacraments? Nothing. He is content if we comply with the easy conditions which are prescribed for the worthy reception of the sacraments. We enjoy greater privileges than any ambassador of any earthly sovereign, for we receive far greater graces and benefits. How culpably, therefore, do those act who disregard the graces of salvation, which God offers them as a pure gift!

(*c.*) Lastly, they wear a peculiar garment whereby they are known as ambassadors, and by which they are distinguished from the other inhabitants of the land. As ambasadors of God we also have a peculiar garment, which at once makes us known as such. This garment we have received in baptism. I do not mean the white garment of baptismal innocence, for this is lost by mortal sin, but the character, the indelible mark which is imprinted upon the soul of the baptized person, and which remains eternally, whether he preserves the baptismal grace or not, whether he is saved or damned. This indelible character distinguishes the Christian as an ambassador of God from all non-christians or unbaptized. At the last judgment we shall see at once who was a Christian and who was not, for whilst Christians have the mark of baptism on their soul, it is wanting to those who are not baptized and consequently not Christians.

May God grant that this indelible mark of baptism, this garment of an ambassador of God, may not be to us a sign of terror and despair, but of consolation and joy. Let us preserve the garment of baptismal innocence with the greatest care, and if unfortunately we have defiled it by mortal sin, let us cleanse it without delay with tears of sincere, heartfelt penance.

Part II.

Ambassadors have various duties, the first of which is—

1. *To defend the honor and authority of their sovereign.* They must not only manifest conduct worthy of their sovereign, but also take his part in word and deed, and prevent all injuries and offenses and everything that might cast a reflection on his reputation. If any remarks be made in public injurious to his honor, they must defend him, and if he be attacked in the public press, they must parry these assaults and invoke the law against the offender. We have the same duty towards God, and indeed a more stringent one, as he infinitely transcends all sovereigns on earth and is holiness itself, whilst even good princes have faults and imperfections. Hence, we must—

(*a.*) Honor God *in our heart*, and rejoice over the honor and homage given to him in heaven and on earth, wishing that he may be known, loved and praised by all men. We must honor him *with the mouth*, by public and private prayer; by assisting at public worship, by bowing our head when pronouncing the name of Jesus, and by speaking reverently of him and of holy things We must honor him *in actions* by doing all things for his honor and by giving good example to our fellow-men. St. Francis of Assisi may serve as a model; when he found a piece of paper on which the name of God was written, he carefully picked it up and preserved it in his cell with great veneration; also St. Ignatius, who in all he undertook had only the honor and glory of God in view. His motto was: All for the greater glory of God.

(*b.*) *We must labor with all our strength, that God may also be honored by our fellow-men.* There are very many men in this world who do not honor God, but rather dishonor and offend him most grievously, such as unbelievers, heretics and sinners. If we have the honor of God at heart, we must pray for these, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth and be converted; we must instruct the ignorant, correct the erring, lead a good Christian life ourselves, and "so let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16. We have a beautiful example of zeal for the honor of God in St. Ignatius, who was accustomed to say; "If it were left to my choice whether, uncertain of my salvation, I would live longer on earth and labour for the honor of God and the salvation of men, or die at once and enter into heavenly glory, I should prefer the former."

2. *They must have the good of their country before their eyes and promote it to the best of their ability.* This is their principal task. For this end they must always keep their eyes open in order to acquire for themselves a true knowledge of the state of affairs, and if they perceive that it is proposed to do something that would be prejudical to their country, they must take precautionary measure against it, make their official remonstrance, report to their government the true state of affairs and ask for further instructions; in short, they must do all they can to avert everything detrimental to their dear country, thus promoting its interests.

As ambassadors of God we have similar duties towards our fatherland, which is the Church. She is our Holy Mother, for she has regenerated us in baptism and made us children of God and heirs of heaven. She loves us more tenderly and affectionately than any mother can love her only child, and does more good to us than the best of mothers could possibly do to her children. Do we not owe to her the true and saving faith? Is it not the Church that continually instructs us in the divine law, entreats, rebukes, reproves and punishes us, in order to save our soul? Does she not administer to us the sacraments, through which we are justified? Does she not daily offer up for us the tremendous sacrifice of the mass, and petition God for every good we need for time and eternity? Do not gratitude and love oblige us to take part with the Church, to share her joys and sorrows, to avert from her every evil and injury and to promote her best interests? Far be it from us to make common cause with the enemies of the Church.

3. *They must protect their countrymen.* In every country there are foreigners and emigrants who live there temporarily or permanently. It is the province of the ambassadors whose countrymen these foreigners and emigrants are, to succor them in their difficulties, to defend them against injustice and oppression and to see that justice is always done them. Hence such foreigners are accustomed in all their necessities to ask their advice and assistance so that they may avoid loss or injury.

In like manner we must interest ourselves for our fellow-men and be solicitous for their temporal and eternal welfare. Christian charity obliges us to this without exception, for if it is true charity, it cannot remain shut up in the heart, but must manifest itself by action, doing good to others where and how it can, according to St. John: "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth."—*I. John* 3:18. Being ambassadors of God, we are bound on every occasion to practise the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. He who neglects these blessed opportunities, merits the displeasure of God, and has reason to fear that

the words may be fulfilled: "Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy."—*James* 2: 13. Fathers, mothers, and superiors are in duty bound to take care of their children and inferiors. If they are not solicitous for their temporal and eternal welfare, if they do not prevent evil-doing among them and insist on their complying with their Christian duties, the words of the Apostle are applicable to them: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*I. Tim.* 5: 8.

PERORATION.

Be mindful, therefore, of the high dignity which you possess as ambassadors of God, and fulfil your duties conscientiously. Be zealous for the honor of God, your King and Lord, and do all you can in order that he may he known, honored and loved. Be firmly and lovingly attached to your Holy Mother the Church, stand by her rights, defend her against her adversaries and shun no sacrifice to promote her best interests. Interest yourselves also for your fellow-men, assist them in their corporal and spiritual necessities, and be especially solicitous for the salvation of those under your charge. Well for you if, as ambassadors of God, you fulfil your duties faithfully and conscientiously; when the time of your departure shall come, you will be able to say with Jesus: *I go to him that sent me.* Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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6. MORAL SKETCH.

THE CHRISTIAN WANDERER.

I go to him that sent me.—John 16: 5.

Our blessed Lord is at the end of his earthly career, he is about to ascend Mount Olivet in order there to begin his last combat and on the following day to finish it on Mount Calvary. He announces this in the gospel of this day: "I go to him that sent me." Hard was his life here on this earth; from the crib to the cross it was an unbroken chain of privations, persecutions and

sufferings. But hard as was the way which he trod, the end thereof was glorious. As soon as he had accomplished the work of Redemption on the cross, the day of triumph came. Glorious and immortal he arose from the dead on the third day, and after forty days ascended into heaven, to take possession of his kingdom and to receive the homage of all creatures that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.—*Phil.* 2: 10-11. Christ is our model; we must become conformable to him, if we wish to partake of his glory in heaven.—*Rom.* 8: 29. As he was a wanderer on earth, who was always obliged to travel on a painful road, so every Christian who cheerfully traverses the way of the cross, is a wanderer; whilst on his pilgrimage he must be content to find only an occasional resting-place, and must console himself with the hope of at last reaching that home where, on the conclusion of his earthly course, he will find the desired repose. Let us to-day meditate on the high destiny of the Christian wanderer, and consider—

I. The way he goes;
II. The resting place he finds;
III. The home that receives him.

PART I.

Numerous, indeed, are the hardships and dangers to which the traveler is ever exposed. Far away from the scenes of his youth we behold him winding his solitary way through a land, the language of whose inhabitants he does not perhaps understand; now bathed, as it were, in his own sweat beneath the rays of the burning sun; now his weary limbs benumbed with icy cold; now drenched by the torrents of rain; now suffering hunger and thirst for whole days together; now sick with no one to nurse him. We are travelers on earth, for "we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."—*Heb.* 13: 14. Our destiny is heaven, which God in his goodness has given us as our home. Every one of us can and must say with Christ: *I go to him that sent me.* There are indeed broad, smooth roads on which it is easy to travel, but these lead not to the heavenly Jerusalem, but to hell. There is only a narrow foot-path to the eternal city abounding with stones and briars, over mountains and precipices, and this is insecure owing to the numerous robbers; no step is without exertion, without danger. "Strait is the way that leadeth to life."—*Matt.* 7: 14.

(*a.*) *On account of our natural inclination to evil.* We have a natural inclination to evil in consequence of original sin. "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from

his youth."—*Gen.* 8: 21. Sin flatters our sensuality and no exertion is needed to commit it; virtue, on the contrary, requires exertion and self-denial, because our corrupt nature protests against it. How difficult it is to suppress all ambition and vanity and to bear all humiliations with fortitude and equanimity? How difficult it is to forgive the offender and to return good for evil! How difficult it is to accept sickness and pains with patience, to subdue our evil desires, and to control our passions! How truly speaks the Apostle when he says: "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind."—*Rom.* 7: 23.

(*b.*) *By reason of the world*, for "all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—*I. John* 2: 16. Whatever we hear and see in the world is sensual and bad; wherever we turn our eyes we meet bad examples and scandals: religion, with her doctrines and ordinances is disregarded and ridiculed, the most shameful vices find their defenders. How easy is it for a Christian to deny his good principles and to side with the children of the world! If the world cannot obtain its aim by persuasion, stratagem, or flattery, it has recourse to rude force; it persecutes the good and makes life disagreeable to them in every possible way. Examples from history and life. The words of the Apostle always prove true: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—*II. Tim.* 5: 12.

(*c.*) *By reason of the devil*, who, as St. Peter says, "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."—*I. Pet.* 5: 8. He suggests bad thougths, excites sensuality, directs the eyes to forbidden objects, and inflames the desire for them; he entices to despair, to presumption, to pusillanimity, or, with the help of frivolous people tries to make man fall. Thus then the way to heaven is difficult and dangerous, and the words of Christ remain true: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—*Matt.* 11: 12.

Part II.

Nothing is more agreeable to a traveler than to find a good resting-place in the evening. Here he recruits himself with good meals, here he dries and cleans his clothes, and refreshes his mind and body by a sound sleep so that on the following day he may be able to pursue his journey.

Such a resting place is prepared by Christ for us wanderers. It is a large commodious house, over whose entrance these words are written: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. This house is the holy

Catholic Church; the owner is Jesus Christ, who in his Church gives us abundant graces to strengthen us on our pilgrimage, so that we may safely arrive at our eternal home. If we fall sick on our journey, we have an infallible remedy for the restoration of our health, a medicine which is given to us gratis; all we have to do is to make a good confession, and our soul will be healed. If on our journey we grow weary the heavenly master of the house offers us the bread of the strong, namely holy communion, which fortifies us with supernatural strength, and, like the Prophet Elias, we can ascend to the holy Mount. If sorely tempted, and in need of consolation, we can have recourse to prayer, through which we obtain all that is good and salutary, according to Christ's promise. "Amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."—*John* 16: 23. In our dying hour we need not lose courage, for Christ sends his priests to administer the sacraments to us, in order that we may safely finish our earthly career.

PART III.

At length, after many a long and weary mile, after countless labors and dangers the traveler, reaches his native place. He already sees his father's house nestling in the peaceful valley. It is Saturday evening. To-morrow is Sunday, dedicated to the service of God and to repose. His parents, and his brothers and sisters, are assembled before the house on the veranda, conversing with one another. They are speaking of the dear son and brother who has been absent from home many a year, and they express the ardent desire that he may soon return home. He approaches the family circle. Who can describe his joy, and the delight and rapture of the family thus taken by surprise? What embraces and kisses? All is over, all sadness, all fear, all longing, danger and grief; he is in the midst of his own, and will now spend the rest of his days in their company.

This is a faint picture of the happiness which after the journey of this life awaits you in heaven. Oh, what will be your feelings when you for ever leave this earth which has brought you nothing but thistles and thorns, and say with St. Paul: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; as to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day."—*II. Tim.* 4: 7, 8. To a pious Christian the last hour is the most beautiful and the dearest of his life. He can say with David: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"—*Ps.* 83: 2. And all the inhabitants of heaven will welcome him, congratulating him and exulting with him; and this joy and exultation will last for ever.

PERORATION.

I know you all wish one day to conclude the journey of life in such a manner. That this inexpressible happiness may fall to your share, do not shun the way which Christ has pointed out to you. Avoid the broad road that leads to destruction and enter upon the narrow path on which the saints walked. Be not deterred by the difficulties of this way; you have in God a father who consoles, comforts, strengthens and provides you with all that is necessary to ensure your safe arrival at your journey's end. Console yourselves with the thought: The way I must go is short; only a few years, and perhaps sooner that I expect, all labor, combat and suffering will be over and I shall enter into my happy home, where I shall find rest for my soul. Walk constantly in the path of salvation, so that you may reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where, with Jesus and his elect, you will reign for ever. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

WE MUST DESPISE, SHUN, AND FEAR TEMPORAL HAPPINESS.

It is expedient to you that I go—John 16: 7.

There is no true, unalloyed happiness on earth. As Jacob clothed his son Joseph with a variegated coat, so God gives us a variegated life, interwoven with happy and unhappy events. Thus the life of the Apostles was sometimes *joyous* and sometimes *sad;* they rejoiced over the presence of their divine Master, and they mourned at his departure. It was, however, expedient for them that he should go, as he himself says in this day's gospel. The departure of Christ was expedient for his disciples, for this reason among others, viz., because sufferings and tribulations are generally more salutary for us than prosperity and happiness. I shall show you to-day that we must despise, shun, and fear what we call temporal happiness, because it is—

I. Contemptible;
II. Perishable;
III. Dangerous.

PART I.

What is called temporal happiness is *contemptible*—

1. *In itself.* Let us consider this more closely. What are precious stones, gold and silver, which the infatuated worldling covets, but formations of the earth? What are fine clothes, in which so many place their whole happiness, but the wool, fur or skins of animals—nay, the productions of worms? What are great dinners and carousals, for which large sums of money are spent? Do they not leave behind them enervation and other evils? What are balls, operas and all the joys of the world? Do they not resemble overseasoned dishes, which cause disgust and vomiting? What are all the honors and dignities with the word gives to its votaries? Can they not be compared to the rainbow, which glitters in magnificent colors, but is dissolved into nothing? In a word, all the joys and goods of the world which constitute temporal happiness are contemptible things.

How true this is, those testify who have enjoyed the happiness of the world in its fulness. Was there ever a king so happy, so wise and so respected as Solomon? What ruler was ever in a position to devote himself to the enjoyments of life as he? And he repeatedly confesses that in spite of all these things he was not satisfied: "I saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind." —*Eccltes.* 2: 11. How wise, how powerful was Alphonsus, king of Sicily, Naples and Arragon! No one seemed to be happier than he, and yet he said that asses are happier than kings, because they are unharnessed at least whilst they are fed, whilst kings have no rest. When Charles V. at Brussels resigned the empire in favor of his son, with tears in his eyes he confessed before the dignitaries of the state that during the whole period of his reign he had not had a quarter of an hour which he could say was spent joyfully. King Antigonus assured his son that the royal dignity is nothing but glittering slavery, and if we knew with what cares and troubles royalty is surrounded, we should not wish for a crown. Who then would value what is commonly called human happiness? Who would not rather despise it?

2. *In comparison with the interior and spiritual consolation of the just.* Some imagine that a pious, Christian life is necessarily united with sadness and melancholy. What a delusion? Pious Christians enjoy, even in sufferings and tribulations, interior joys and consolations, which have their foundation in a good consci-

ence, in the grace of the Holy Ghost, and in the expectation of eternal beatitude, and these joys and consolations are so great that they would not exchange them for all worldly joys and happiness.

Interior joys are hidden manna, which is given to those only who triumph over the world, the flesh and the devil. "To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna."—*Apoc.* 2: 17. "The hidden manna," because no one knows how great these joys are, except those who taste them. He who all his life has drank nothing but water thinks that there is no better beverage; but when he has once tasted costly wine, he changes his opinion, and confesses that wine is better than water. In like manner worldlings, if they had any knowledge of the interior joys and consolations of the just, would judge otherwise thereof, and acknowledge that all earthly joys are a mere nothing compared with them. Examples: St. Jerome felt such abundance of joy in solitude that he said: "The Lord is my witness, I am filled with such joy that I seem to be among the choirs of angels." St. Bernard was always so cheerful that he often said: "I am more cheerful in solitude than I ever was in the world." St. John Berchmans was always so good-humored that they called him St. Hilarius, that is, the merry saint. He used to say of himself that he did not know what melancholy is. But he daily asked the Holy Ghost for this joy during the sacrifice of the mass.

3. *Compared with the joy of the saints of heaven.* Consider all the pleasures and joys which men have tasted from the beginning of the world to the present day, and compare them with the felicity of the saints in heaven; are they not more insignificant than a grain of sand compared with the whole earth? Yes, all earthly happiness compared with the felicity of the elect in heaven is sorrow and sadness rather than joy and consolation. St. Augustine says: "This glory, this beauty, this majesty, which will be our felicity, surpasses our hope and love, our wishes and desires. This felicity may be acquired, but cannot be sufficiently appreciated; it can be merited, but not described." And St. Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor.* 2: 9.

Thus, then, what is called temporal happiness is, in reality, vain and perishable. What should we learn from this? That we must disdain everything which the world promises, such as honor and reputation, money and lands, joys and pleasures, and aspire with all our affections to heavenly and eternal goods. Let us follow the admonition of the Apostle: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind

the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." —*Col.* 3: 1: 2.

PART II.

Earthly happiness is *perishable*, it resembles—

1. *A leaf that is carried off by the wind.* Do not think of a leaf that still hangs on the tree, for this remains all the summer, even until late in the autumn, without being blown off by the wind; but, imagine leaves that have become detached from the tree. If the wind catches them, they flutter a little while in the air and then fall to the ground. Honors and dignities, as well as all the joys and pleasures of this world, resemble such leaves; carried by the wind of luck they flutter, as it were, only a short time in the air, fall to the ground and are no more.

2. They are a type of the ivy which God caused to grow up where Jonas had sat down to watch the destruction of Nineve. It afforded a splendid shade, and the prophet was greatly rejoiced, for it was the hot season of the year. But behold, the next day, by the command of God, a worm gnawed at the root of the ivy, and it withered away. Jonas, who had no longer any shade and was almost perishing with the heat, became so impatient that he wished himself dead. Such is all earthly happiness. Man rejoices at it as Jonas did at the ivy, but his joy is only of short duration. The worm of time gnaws at his happiness, and it dies away, often quite unexpectedly. He may grieve himself to death, but, like the ivy, it will thrive no more; it is dead for ever.

3. It is like a wheel that turns around. When the royal prophet saw wicked men happy in everything, he became excited and prayed to God to make them like a wheel: "O my God, make them like a wheel."—*Ps.* 82: 14. When a wheel turns round, that part which is uppermost does not remain so long, but turns with the wheel and comes to be undermost. Thus men's wheel of fortune is also turned, and the rich who are now highly esteemed and respected may soon lose honor and dignity, houses and lands, health and prosperity, and be reduced to poverty.

Sesostris, king of Egypt, proud of having subdued many kings, used to ride out in a superb equipage, adorned with gold and precious stones; it was not drawn by horses, but by four conquered kings. One of these unfortunate kings one day fixed his eyes on the wheels of the chariot. Sesostris, whom the significant look did not escape, asked him why he gazed so intently at the wheels. His answer was, "When I consider how the wheels turn round, and see that the uppermost part of the wheel soon

becomes the undermost, I represent to myself the inconstancy and instability of all earthly happiness, which is as changeable as a wheel, so that he who is now uppermost will the next moment become undermost and humbled to the very dust." How truly this captive king spoke, David testifies, saying: "I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus. And I passed by, and lo, he was not; and I sought him, and his place was not found."—*Ps.* 36: 35, 36. Examples from history: Napoleon I. and III. From life. How often does it not happen that men who have possessed great riches, occupied high positions, and seen prosperous days, are, sooner or later, quite unexpectedly reduced to mediocrity and even to abject poverty, ending their lives in alms-houses! What folly, then, would it not be to neglect the salvation of our soul and devote our solicitude to the ever varying whims of fortune, which is so blind and fallacious! Let us rather take to heart the words of Christ: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Let us so treat temporal things that we may not lose what is eternal. Let us look upon the goods of this world as means for attaining our eternal destiny, and esteem and use them only in so far as they may be necessary or conducive to our own or our neighbor's welfare.

Part III.

Earthly happiness is *dangerous*, because it frequently—

1. *Leads to grievous sins.* "All things turn out well for them that love God." They are like the bees, which suck honey from the blossoms, whether they find them in beautiful gardens or in gloomy forests. Earthly welfare and fortune are at least dangerous because they usually lead men to pride, intemperance, luxury, idleness and to many other sins, as history and experience teach us. If a man has everything that his heart can desire, a heaven upon earth, as it were, he only too frequently forgets God and his eternal destiny; he grows careless, and negligent, and indulges his passions, whilst in time of tribulation he turns his heart from temporal things, occupies himself with eternity and begins to serve God. As long as Saul tended his father's sheep, he was humble, obedient and pious; but after he had exchanged the shepherd's staff for the sceptre, he allowed his heart to be captivated by pride, hatred, envy and other passions: he became so intractable and stubborn that God saw himself obliged to reject him. The wisest man that ever lived, Solomon, became so effeminate and blinded by his continual, uninterrupted good fortune that he fell into the horrible sin of idolatry. Do not consider it, therefore, an evil to be visited by tribulations. Should

your life be a continuous chain of privations, sufferings and pain, be contented and at ease; perhaps prosperity and happiness would be for you the glittering blade with which you would stab your soul and inflict a mortal wound.

2. *It robs us of the heavenly goods.* There is no doubt that some of those who had possessed great riches or occupied high positions in society, and enjoyed a happy life, went to heaven after their death, but, obeying the counsel of Christ, they did violence to themselves. They humbled themselves, gave alms generously and most carefully avoided every sin, and did all they could and all that was required of them for their salvation. But we must admit that their life was hard, for it is hard for Christians who give up their enjoyment in this world in order to be saved; hence St. Chrysostom says: "It is impossible for one to enjoy rest here and hereafter. It is imposible for him who lives here in carelessness and security, and spends his days in enjoyment and laziness, to receive honor hereafter." Very frequently, nay, almost always, it comes to pass that those who always have a happy time here upon earth, are deprived of celestial happiness. We cannot have heaven here and hereafter. Christ was obliged to suffer, and by sufferings he entered into glory. Jesus was on the cross, Mary under the cross, but neither without the cross. (Lazarus and Dives.) Therefore if you possess the goods of this world, set not your heart and affections upon them, but make them give way to the riches of eternity. Purchase for yourselves with your riches, not hell, but heaven.

3. *They cast us into hell.* Temporal welfare leads not only to sins and vices, but frequently to final impenitence. The prosperous sinner feels happy; he does not think of penance and amendment of life, but perseveres in sin, and perishes. It is therefore frequently no punishment, but a great grace, for sinners to be visited by crosses and afflictions, for through these God compels them, as it were, to return from their evil ways and to save their souls by penance. On the other hand, it is often the greatest punishment God can inflict upon a sinner to allow him to continue in sin undisturbed, and not to put a stop to his wicked career by tribulations; it is a sure sign that he is rejected by God, and so he rushes headlong to perdition. Hence the Fathers and spiritual writers compare a sinner to cattle kept for fattening, which are permitted to eat all they can, but only because they are destined for slaughter. Examples: The people at the time of Noe. The hundred and twenty years which God gave them for doing penance were spent in pleasure, and amusement; they laughed and joked, gave feasts, danced, married and gave in marriage, but suddenly the deluge broke in upon them and de-

livered these impenitent sinners to everlasting fire. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha. Having everything in abundance and spending their days in joys and pleasures, they fell into the most abominable vices; and not being punished for their unnatural excesses, they became more wicked, and never thought of reconciling themselves to God by penance. But lo! suddenly a rain of fire and brimstone fell upon these wicked people and destroyed them and their cities

PERORATION.

It seems to me that you have very little reason to envy those who spend their days in the enjoyment of all the goods and pleasures of this world. Such children of fortune are more to be pitied than envied, for temporal happiness is despicable, perishable and dangerous. Do not love what deserves no love; love only what is permanent, and not injurious and dangerous; love what all the saints have loved and esteemed as the highest good and greatest grace—tribulations and sufferings. Reflect seriously, that not through riches and pleasures, but "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."—*Acts* 14: 21. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

EPISTLE. *James* 1: 22-27. Dearly beloved: Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion, clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self unspotted from this world.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE HEARING OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND EXERCISES OF PIETY.

This is Rogation Week. From the earliest times the Church has made processions during this week, and with impressive words admonished the faithful to pray. She has the best reasons for doing so. It is a duty incumbent upon all to offer God the homage of adoration, love, obedience and thanksgiving; and this is done by the prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Prayer, considered as a petition, is the chief means for the obtaining of all graces; the just man must pray in order to persevere in righteousness; the sinner must pray in order to obtain the necessary grace for repentance and the amendment of his life. Without prayer no one can work out his salvation and be saved. We should, however, greatly deceive ourselves if we were to believe that by prayer alone we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. A good Christian life is necessary. If we wish God to listen to our prayer and to receive it, we must also listen to his holy word and lead

a pious life. To this truth St. James calls our attention in the epistle of this day, for he shows us in it—

I. That we must not only hear the word of God, but obey it;
II. That we must show our piety in deed and in truth.

Part I.

1. *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* St. James had no reason to reprove the faithful of his time for not hearing the word of God. On the contrary, they were very zealous in this point, and deserved praise rather than blame. Among modern Christians very many are found who will not hear of the word of God, and frequently neglect to hear it. Instead of attending sermons and catechetical instructions on Sundays and holidays, they take a walk, visit saloons, or stay at home. He who loathes all food, even bread, is sick, and his sickness will last until his appetite returns. He who loathes the spiritual bread, the word of God, is spiritually sick; passions and vices reign in his heart, such as pride, impurity, unbelief, irreligion, and these are the reasons why he despises the word of God. The consequences of the neglect of hearing the word of God are very disastrous. They are, ignorance and errors in matters of religion, transgression of the duties of religion and of our state of life, obstinacy and impenitence.

But we must not content ourselves with the mere hearing of the word of God, for the apostle says: *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.* When the authorities make a law, they are not satisfied that subjects merely take cognizance of it; they desire rather that they obey it; he who does not obey it is fined or imprisoned. Thus God requires of us to observe his holy law. Hence Christ says: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."—*Luke* 11: 28. And St. Paul says: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified."—*Rom.* 2: 13. How many are there who indeed hear the word of God, but do not obey it! In this parish from sixty to a hundred sermons are preached every year; if by each sermon only one sinner were converted, in ten or twelve years the congregation would entirely consist of pious people. But this, alas! is not the case; on the contrary, a hundred sermons are hardly able to bring one sinner to repentance and to change one careless person into a zealous Christian. Let each one ask himself to-day: How do matters stand with me? I have heard during my lifetime more than a hundred, perhaps a thousand sermons. Have I amended my life, given up my bad habits, my favorite faults?

Consider what the Apostle adds: *Deceiving your own selves*. There are those who think that it is a very wonderful thing if they are present at the sermons and catechetical instructions, that God will reward them for it. It is good to hear sermons, but by no means sufficient; the principal object is doing what we hear in sermons. The Scribes and Pharisees frequently listened to the word of God, which Christ preached, but persevering in their unbelief and impenitence, they derived not the least advantage from it. Therefore our Lord says: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin."—*John* 15: 22. It would be a great self-delusion to expect salvation from the mere hearing of the word of God. A hundred sermons, which you hear, but which have no effect on you, cannot save you from damnation; on the other hand, one sermon which you hear with profit is able to bring about your salvation.

2. The Apostle makes use of a similitude to explain that the mere hearing of the word of God is useless, when he says: *If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was.* The Apostle compares the word of God to a mirror, and rightly, for as the mirror shows us the bodily form, so the word of God shows us the spiritual; it leads us to self-knowledge and discovers what is good and bad in us. Again he compares the mere hearer of the word of God with a man who looks transiently into a mirror, for to stand long before the looking-glass and contemplate one's self carefully is peculiar to the female, and not to the male sex. When we hear the word of God, we are not to imitate the men, but the women. How many are obliged, when they hear a sermon, to say to themselves: It is true, this hits me, I am guilty of this sin, this inordinate inclination rules in my heart; but full of levity as they are, they care no further about this contradiction of their life with the word of God, and make no resolution of amendment. How many on hearing sermons make some good purpose or other, but on leaving the church, forget it and continue their worldly and sinful life! How many really begin to shun a certain sin but relapse the moment a greater temptation than usual assails them!

3. *But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* By the perfect law of liberty we are to understand the Christian law, Christianity. It is called *perfect* in itself, because it contains all that makes man good and perfect, if he lives according to it; and in

contradistinction to the Old Law of the Jews, which was imperfect. It is called the *law of liberty*, because it frees men from the yoke of the ceremonial law of Moses (*Gal.* 5: 1), and from the slavery of sin (*John* 8: 32), and raises them to the dignity of the children of God. The meaning of this whole passage is: He who contemplates the word of God attentively and diligently, and endeavors to form his life according to it, arrives at true justice and has the sure hope of being saved. That the word of God may produce these effects in you, hear it attentively and diligently, meditate on it, and obey it with zeal and perseverance in all circumstances of life.

Part II.

St. James shows that we must practice the works of piety in a threefold manner, *by bridling the tongue, by mercy, and by being undefiled by the world.*

1. *If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* St. James puts the bridling of the tongue in the first place, because without it a truly pious life is absolutely impossible. The Apostle probably knew people who diligently went to church, prayed much, fasted, gave alms, and *led an otherwise edifying life*, but one thing was wanting, i. e., they did not bridle their tongue. They reviled when they were reviled; they were not meek; they sharply criticised others when they committed a fault or appeared to commit it; they lacked charity, which thinks no evil and judges all men charitably. They made the sins and frailties of others the topics of their conversation. They complained of the wicked world and the levity of the people, whilst they themselves led a pious and retired life; or having a controlling voice in spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs, they became peevish and angry when others would not assent to their judgments and opinions; self-esteem and selfishness lurked in their heart. Although they had the appearance of piety and thought themselves pious, nevertheless they were not, but deceived themselves, because they did not bridle their tongue. The essentially necessary virtues of meekness, humility, modesty, and love were wanting to their piety.

Let us consider this, and not forget that, first of all, the bridling of the tongue is required for true piety. You may pray as much as you please, assist at every devotion that is going on in the church, frequently receive the sacraments, but if you have a tongue that criticises and finds fault with everything, lowers your neighbor in the estimation of others, mercilessly discloses

his faults and even starts calumnies against him; and if on every occasion you speak of the good you do, and place your real, and perhaps only imaginary, advantages in a favorable light, you deceive yourselves if you think yourselves pious; your piety is vain tinsel and without value before God. We all must make a note of this, especially the female sex, which is called the devout sex, not without reason, though frequently committing this fault of giving the tongue too free a scope, and sinning by vain, uncharitable, untrue and slanderous discourses.

2. *Religion, clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation.* The second requisite for true piety is *mercy to the needy*. Among the works of mercy the Apostle mentions especially the support of widows and orphans, because in the primitive ages of Christianity many were made widows and orphans by the persecutions, and because widows and orphans, as a rule, are the most destitute and helpless. Since God calls himself the father of widows and orphans (*Ps.* 67: 6), and takes great pleasure in the works of mercy, and since Christ expressly declares that he receives the good we do to others as done to himself (*Matt.* 32: 40), by these works of mercy we render a service to God, as it were; hence St. Paul calls the practice of these works *a service of God*. St. Chrysostom says: "Charity is better than to be a king and to wear a crown; it builds houses in heaven, which last for ever. It teaches you how to become like to God. Charity is something great and precious. Charity is a greater virtue than to raise the dead to life. Charity makes God your debtor."

3. *And to keep one's self unspotted from this world.* This is the third thing which St. James requires for piety. In order to keep ourselves unspotted from this world, we must shun three principal vices, which St. John mentions in these words: "All that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—*I. John* 2: 16. The concupiscence of the flesh consists in gluttony, impurity, and all kinds of sinful pleasures; the concupiscence of the eyes, or covetousness, is the inordinate craving after temporal goods and the sinful attachment to them; the pride of life, or ambition, embraces all sins of vanity and pride. The greater part of mankind are more or less infected with these three vices, and even Christians who lead tolerably regular and well-ordered lives, are not entirely free from them, for they have too great a desire after temporal pleasures and enjoyments, or cling too much to money and property, or are not humble enough, seeking honor and praise from the world and feeling offended and injured by the least neglect, often only an imaginary one. Though such Christians lead a pious life outwardly and have

many redeeming qualities, they are by no means really pious, for true piety consists in a perfect attachment and devotedness to God, which they still lack, for they have not removed the inordinate love God of self and the world out of their hearts. Let each one examine himself to-day and see whether he is free from immoderate longing after pleasures, from covetousness and ambition.

PERORATION.

Meditate on the lessons and precepts which St. James gives us in the epistle of this day and make them the rule of your life. Esteem and love the word of God; hear it and endeavor to regulate your life according to it. Bridle your tongue and guard against slander, detraction, calumny, and whispering; against vain self-praise, impure words and songs, raillery, curses and blasphemies, reflecting that one day you will be obliged to give an account of every idle word. Be merciful and charitable to the poor and needy, and do good to them, for nothing is more acceptable to God and of greater advantage to you for time and eternity than charity. Keep yourselves undefiled from the excesses, dissipations, and vices of the world, and lead a mortified, moral life, for herein consists the piety which will open to you the gates of heaven. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Gospel. *John* 16: 23-30. At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples say to him; Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou need-

est not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.

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2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE CONSOLING PROMISES WHICH CHRIST MADE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

The gospel of this day is again a portion of the farewell discourse which our divine Saviour delivered at the Last Supper. In order to console his disciples for his departure, he repeatedly gives them the assurance that all things, whatsoever they should ask the Father in his name, would be given them. Moreover, he remarks to them, that, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, they will know and understand the revealed lessons and truths which, up to this time, had remained in some measure unintelligible and obscure to them. Christ promises his disciples—

I. That their prayers shall always be heard;
II. That they shall come to the full knowledge of the divine doctrine.

PART I.

1. Twice does our Lord assure his disciples that their prayer shall be heard. *Amen, amen, I say to you: If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.*

(*a.*) He says *Amen, amen.* He utters this twofold assurance in order to inspire his disciples with courage, and to free them from all doubt that their prayer would be heard. How could the slightest idea arise in their minds that their prayer would be in vain, when Christ had assured them so emphatically and with a solemn oath that it would always be heard? In view of the promise of Christ let us always pray with confidence, for confidence is one of the most necessary conditions of prayer. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—*James* 1: 6, 7. Let us as often as we present our necessities to the Lord in prayer remember the words *Amen, amen,* in order to enliven and to strengthen our confidence in God.

(*b.*) He continues: *If you ask the Father.* What confidence must the disciples have conceived when Christ directed them to turn to God in prayer, who is not only his but also their Father. From

whom can children expect consolation and help with greater confidence than from their father? Truly, earthly fathers may sometimes be heartless towards their children and refuse their petitions; frequently they are willing but unable to supply the wants of their children. Not so our heavenly Father, who is infinitely good and powerful, and therefore always can and will hear our prayer.

(*c.*) If you ask *in my name.* To pray in the name of Jesus is to ask something through his mediation, through his intercession, in virtue of his merits. We are sinners and have nothing that could please God. Every favor we obtain by prayer is granted not so much to us as to Jesus Christ, not so much for our sake as for the sake of Jesus Christ, who is our Mediator and Intercessor and who, by his life, passion and death has merited for us that our prayer should be heard. Mindful of this important truth, we must humble ourselves in prayer, and not place our confidence in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ. If it were not for his merits, all our prayers and petitions would be in vain; they would not be heard. Those people who ask for anything detrimental to their salvation do not pray in the name of Jesus, and instead of making him their Mediator they abuse his goodness. Nor do those Christians who are ever soliciting temporal blessings, but who are cold and indifferent when their salvation ought to be their concern, fulfil the injunction of our Redeemer to pray in his name.

(*d.*) If you ask *anything.* Our Lord speaks here in general terms, and does not intimate that we obtain only this or that. Prayer is the universal remedy for the averting of all evil and the obtaining of all good. What a happiness to be empowered to present to God any request whatsoever, provided only it be consistent with what is right! Is not this an ample grant from the bounty of the Almighty? Therefore, if you wish for anything, ask; your prayer will not be in vain. Have recourse to prayer in all your corporal and spiritual necessities.

(*e.*) *He will give it you.* It is your business to pray, and it is God's business to give. Every prayer, if the necessary conditions be fulfilled, will be heard. God hears us even when he seems not to, for instead of giving what we ask him he gives us something better, which he knows is necessary and wholesome for us. Instead of taking away a cross from us, for the removal of which we petition, he gives us patience to bear it and thus to merit heaven. He acts like a prudent physician, who prescribes, not according to the inclination of the patient, but according to the nature of the disease.

2. *Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

(*a.*) Hitherto the Apostles were not yet sufficiently instructed in regard to Jesus Christ, his Incarnation and the mystery of Redemption; they did not yet know that God would hear us only on account of the merits of his Son; they had frequently prayed to God, but without reference to Jesus Christ and his mediation and merits. But henceforth they and all the faithful were to direct their petitions to God the Father, in the name of Jesus, for only thus could they expect to be heard. This then is also the reason why the Church, in all her prayers, appeals to Jesus Christ and concludes them in these or similar words: "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let us, as often as we pray, think that we can pray acceptably to God and be heard only through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Let us also consider how much it cost our Redeemer to enable us to pray in his name and be heard. He came from heaven to live on this earth for thirty-three years in poverty and lowliness, to endure countless privations, and hardships, and the bitter contempt of an ungrateful world, and finally to die on the cross. A drop of the blood of Jesus Christ clings to every grace which we receive from God by prayer. Considering this, let us appreciate the graces and benefits which God imparts to us through the merits of his Son, and avail ourselves of them for his honor and our own salvation.

(*b.*) Christ exhorts his disciples to pray, that their joy may be full. What does this mean? It means: If they pray in his name, they will receive whatever they ask, and the prayer itself, as well as the granting of their petition, will give them joy. According to the promise of Christ, prayer is the means of obtaining perfect joy. That we miserable creatures are allowed to approach God, the Lord of heaven and earth, full of confidence, and to reveal to him the secrets of our heart, is a great blessing for us. Though we may obtain nothing by prayer, yet of itself it affords a pleasure which cannot he expressed in words and which is only known to him who enjoys it. What consolation then must the Christian experience from prayer when it is heard? It is a proof that he has truly prayed in the name of Jesus and that he enjoys the love and grace of God. And what increases his joy still more are the gifts which he receives through prayer. We do not always obtain by prayer all temporal goods and are not freed from all evils, but we obtain through it supernatural and spiritual goods, such as are necessary and useful for attaining our final aim; for instance, grace to overcome temptations, increase of sanctifying grace, and final perseverance; and these alone are desirable benefits, which make our joy full. Pray, then,

fervently and often in the name of Jesus, and you will discover that your joy, even in the midst of afflictions, will be full and perfect.

Part II.

The other consoling promise made by our Lord to his disciples is this, that they should come to the perfect knowledge of his divine doctrine.

1. *These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father.* What Jesus had hitherto in veiled and obscure expressions spoken to his disciples concerning his death and Resurrection, the Holy Ghost, and the joys awaiting them, he would reveal to them in plain words at the proper time. Our Lord refers to the time after his Resurrection, when he remained on earth for forty days and frequently appeared to his disciples; and to the mission of the Holy Ghost, who descended upon them on the day of Pentecost. Speaking (as we read in the Acts of the Apostles) with his Apostles after the Resurrection, always of the kingdom of God, he gave them an insight into everything that hitherto had remained to them unintelligible and obscure. And with what light were they illuminated when the Holy Ghost came upon them! How plainly and lucidly do we hear them speak of the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, and in general of divine Revelation! What comprehensive and lucid instruction Christ imparted to his disciples after his Resurrection we can infer from their acts, such as the election of a new Apostle, the appointment of deacons, the imposition of hands for the communication of the Holy Ghost, the anointing of the sick, the breaking of bread.

The knowledge of the truths of religion, which Christ imparted to the Apostles personally and through the Holy Ghost, is also communicated to us; for the Catholic Church, established by Christ and guided by the Holy Ghost, teaches us all whatsoever we are to believe and to do, in order to please God and to be saved. If the doctrine of Christ remains unintelligible to so many, it is solely their own fault. They neglect the instruction which is given on Sundays and holidays; they never read a spiritual book; hence their ignorance in matters of religion; hence also their unchristian life. With many others various passions and vices are the cause of their ignorance and errors in religious things, for the more man turns away from God and sinks into sin and vice, the more obscure and enigmatical become to him the mysteries of faith, and he is frequently delivered over to total blindness and unbelief. "Their own malice blinds them."—*Wis.*

2:21. In order to be preserved from such a dangerous and pernicious ignorance, love to hear the word of God and to read spiritual books, especially on Sundays and holidays; control your passions and walk in the fear of God, for this is, as we frequently read in the Lives of the Saints, the best means for acquiring the knowledge of Christian truth and for our growth therein.

2. *In that day you shall ask in my name, and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* Here again we have a very consoling promise for the Apostles, for Christ assures them of the special love of his heavenly Father. I shall always be your Mediator and Intercessor, but I will not mention this now, for God, my heavenly Father, himself loves you and gives you all things whatsoever you shall ask him in my name. What a glorious promise! Can there be a sweeter solace for us mortals on earth than to be able to say to ourselves: God loves me, he loves me more affectionately than the best father ever loved his child, and he is ready to give me everything I ask of him. Christ assigns as the reason of this love of God for his Apostles, *that they have loved him* (*Christ*) *and believed in him.* The Apostles believed in him as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, and often, but more especially in the gospel of this day, expressed this faith with these words: *Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.* They confess his omniscience and the coming forth from God the Father, that is, his eternal generation from the Father, and, consequently, his Divinity. Their love of him was also very sincere and affectionate, for it was this love that made them leave all things and follow him; made them endure ignominy, persecution, sufferings of every sort, and finally death by martyrdom.

We must also acquire the love of God by *believing and loving. By faith,* for "without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. Those are in great error who say that it matters not what a man believes; provided he lead an honest life he pleases God and will be saved; a Jew or a Gentile, a Mohammedan or a Christian, a Catholic or a Protestant, it is all the same; we all believe in one God, and as there are many ways to Rome, so there are many ways to heaven. A man who talks thus is no Catholic, nor is he ever likely to become one. But love is equally as necessary as faith, for the Apostle says: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2. As you need two feet for walking, so you need faith and love in order to walk in the way of salvation and to enter into heaven. How is it with your faith? Do

you believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to your faith? Are you ready to make a sacrifice of everything, even of your life, for the Catholic faith? How is it with your love? Is it active? Do you keep the commandments of God? Do you sincerely love your neighbor, even your enemies, and those who offend you?

β. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father.* These words also contain consolation for the Apostles. When Christ says that he came forth from the Father, he expresses his eternal generation from God the Father, and consequently his Divinity. What a consolation for the Apostles to be able to say to themselves: Jesus, our Master, is the Son of God, true God. By saying, *I am come into the world*, he indicates that he became man for our redemption. What a consolation for the Apostles, since this word represented to them the inexpressible grace of Redemption. *Again I leave the world and go to the Father.* What fresh consolation for the Apostles, not only for the sake of their divine Master, whom they dearly loved, and whose glory in heaven filled them with the greatest joy, but also for their own sake, because they had the sure hope of going to him and partaking of his happiness.

PERORATION.

The words of our Lord: *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father*, deserve our most serious consideration, for applied to us they describe our destiny here. We came forth from the Father into the world, for God is our Creator; to him we owe our life and existence. But God has created us for no other purpose than to serve him and thus to save our souls. Now, if we comply with this we shall attain our eternal destiny and shall be saved; Oh, let us during this week, and daily, so long as we live, fervently pray to God for grace that he may keep us in his holy love; but let us also vow to him fidelity, love and obedience, and persevere constantly in his holy service all the days of our lives, that at the hour of death we may be able to say with Jesus: *I leave the world and go to the Father.* Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.—John 16: 23.

There is nothing more frequently spoken of in the Old and the New Testament than *prayer;* in almost countless passages we are admonished to pray. Our divine Saviour does the same in the gospel of this day; he exhorts us to pray. But, that we may the more readily follow his invitation, he promises that we shall obtain all the requests which we present to God, our heavenly Father, in *his name.* He gives us the most beautiful examples of fervor in prayer, for he prayed often and much, passing whole nights in prayer. All Christians solicitous for their salvation were friends of prayer, and among all the saints you will not find one who has not loved to pray. But prayer is also one of the most necessary exercises for the Christian. St. Augustine says: "Prayer is the nourishment of the soul, for as the body cannot live without food, so the soul cannot sustain life without prayer." He who despises prayer and will not hear it spoken of is in a bad condition; his salvation is in danger; he has on his forehead the infallible sign of reprobation. I shall speak to-day about the necessity of prayer, and prove to you that it is necessary—

I. Being a commandment of God;
II. As a means of salvation.

PART I.

It is by no means left to our own caprice whether we shall pray or not. It is not merely an invitation or a counsel; it is a precept, and we are bound to obey it.

1. The obligation to pray is founded on the natural law, and it is written in every man's heart that he must pray. We therefore find that even the Gentiles, who had no knowledge of divine revelation, were convinced of the necessity of prayer, and really

prayed to their gods. Plutarch, a pagan historian, says: "Travel over the world, wherever you may, you will find cities without walls, without sciences, without kings, without money and riches, but no one has yet seen a city that had no gods or temples; and I think that a city can be formed and exist without a foundation rather than a community without faith in a deity (and consequently also without prayer)." Therefore the pagans insisted upon the adoration of their deities with such severity that they punished with death those Christians who refused to adore their imaginary gods. He, then, who does not pray, sins against the natural law and places himself on a level with irrational animals that do not know their Lord and Creator.

2. God has, however, emphatically enjoined upon us the duty of constant prayer. Thus he spoke to the Israelites: "You shall not fear strange gods, nor shall you adore them, nor worship them, nor sacrifice to them; but the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power, and a stretched-out arm, him shall you fear, and him shall you adore, and to him shall you sacrifice."—4. *Kings* 17: 35, 36. Such admonitions to pray constantly occur in the Old Testament. And how often does Christ exhort us to pray? "Ask, and it shall be given you." —*Matt.* 7: 7. "Watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is."—*Mark* 13: 33. "Watch ye therefore, praying at all times." —*Luke* 21: 36. The Apostles also exhort the faithful to pray. "Pray without ceasing."—*I. Thess.* 5: 17. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God."—*Phil.* 4: 6.

3. *That prayer is a commandment of God is evident from the essence of prayer.*

(*a.*) Every prayer, whether it be one of praise, of thanksgiving, or of petition is *an adoration of God*, for whether we praise him, give him thanks, or petition him, we always by prayer recognize that he is our Lord and Creator, the source of every blessing, that we depend on him entirely, that we owe all to him, and that in all our necessities we are dependent on him, and that consequently we acknowledge him as our Lord and God and subject ourselves to him. If we never pray, we set him aside altogether and care as little about him as about a foreign prince or potentate who does not concern us and who has no claim on us. Can God allow this? Can he suffer men, his creatures, his children, to disregard him entirely? Certainly not, otherwise he would cease to be God. Prayer therefore is evidently a commandment of God; he who does not fulfil this commandment re-

fuses to God due homage and submission, and assumes the nature of the devil, to whom prayer is an abomination.

(*b.*) *In prayer we praise and glorify God;* this is particularly the case in that kind of prayer which we call the *prayer of praise.* It is the duty of every man to praise and glorify God, for he has created us and the whole world for his honor and glory. In the Sacred Scripture all rational and irrational creatures are called upon to glorify the Lord.—*Ps.* 148; *Dan.* 3. He who does not pray, does not praise and glorify God, and consequently acts contrary to his destiny, and sins. *In prayer we give thanks to God.* We do this in the prayer which we call *prayer of thanksgiving.* Is it not the duty of every man to show gratitude to God? Are we not all that we are through him? Have we anything good that does not come from him? Do we not require thanks for trifling charitable donations? and shall God demand no gratitude for the great benefits which he has bestowed on us? God insists that we should be grateful, and for this reason we are frequently admonished in the Sacred Scriptures to return thanks to him for his benefits; and the gospel records that Christ was very much displeased because of the ten lepers whom he had healed only one returned to give thanks. He, therefore, who does not pray, evidently violates the duty of gratitude, and sins. *In prayer we petition God,* and this we do in the prayer which is called the *prayer of petition.* What must we think of a man who never prays, and consequently never asks God for anything? What else but that he thinks that God is either not willing or not able to give him anything, or that he does not need God's help. But he who thinks so, sins against faith, for it is an article of faith that God is almighty, infinitely good, and always ready and desirous to help us, and that of ourselves we can do nothing. Moreover, God has made the prayer of petition the means for obtaining his goods and gifts: *Ask, and you shall receive.* He who does not pray acts contrary to the express will of God, ignores the conditions under which he is willing to impart his benefits to us, and sins grievously against him. Prayer, therefore, is a commandment of God and like every other commandment, we must also observe this one, that we may not be rejected on the day of judgment. But prayer is not only a commandment of God; it is also a means of salvation.

PART II.

Every man, the just as well as the unjust, needs prayer, if he wishes to be saved; the former, because without prayer he can-

not persevere in the state of justice; the latter, because without prayer repentance and conversion are impossible.

1. *Prayer being the most necessary means for perseverance in good, those who are in the state of grace must unceasingly pray, in order not to fall into sin and to forfeit the grace of God.*

(*a.*) St. Paul exhorts us (*Phil.* 2: 12) to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; and justly, for as long as we sojourn upon earth we are exposed to great dangers; powerful enemies are fighting against us and endeavoring to plunge us into perdition. Man has the greatest enemy within himself, and this is evil concupiscence, which renders every good thing difficult to him and frequently allures him to sin. The Apostle complains of this domestic foe when he writes: "I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man, but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members."—*Rom.* 7: 22, 23. The devil is the confederate of this enemy. He goes about, as St. Peter says, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.—*I. Pet.* 5: 8. Moreover, we live in a world in which there are so many bad examples and scandals, that we may consider ourselves fortunate if we do not deviate from the strait and narrow way that leads to heaven and suffer the loss of our souls.

What resource have we against all these enemies of our salvation? *Prayer.* Christ emphatically says! "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26: 41. By prayer we obtain the grace of God, which enlightens us, so that we may be aware of of the subtle assaults of the enemies of our souls and able to oppose them successfully. St. Augustine says: "As long as you pray you may be assured that the divine mercy will not fail to assist you." St. Chrysostom says: "The roaring of lions does not chase off wild beasts so easily as the prayer of the just disperses the enemies of the soul."

(*b.* Experience also proves this. As long as a Christian prays with fervor and devotion he leads a good life. The temptations which assail him inwardly and outwardly may be numerous and continuous; he stands firm, for as the stake supports the little tree, so prayer supports him. But if he becomes careless in prayer, and neglects it altogether, or performs it only hastily and without devotion, he totters and falls, and it is a terrible fall. He falls into the dangerous state of lukewarmness, which is the precursor of sin and of the loss of grace. Peter furnishes us with a sad example. He had repeatedly assured his Lord that he would

never deny him, that he was ready to die with him. There can be no doubt that he was really in earnest, nevertheless he became faithless to his promise and denied his Lord and Master on three different occasions. Why? Because he neglected prayer. Our Lord had commanded him and the other Apostles to watch and pray, but he slept; vainly confident of himself he neglected to ask the assistance of God for the hour of danger. Therefore pray without ceasing, for prayer is the most necessary means for the preservation of grace and for perseverance in virtue.

2. *Prayer is also for the sinner an absolutely necessary means of salvation*, for without prayer he cannot truly amend his life and obtain sanctifying grace.

(*a.*) We read in the Bible of many sinners that were converted, but we do not read of one that he accomplished the important work of repentance and conversion without prayer. The first sound that came out of the mouth of penitent David was a sorrowful confession of his sins, a prayer. Full of contrition, he sighed: "I have sinned against the Lord."—*II. Kings* 12: 13. And long after he had found grace he continued to pray with the greatest fervor. As he says himself, he prayed seven times to the Lord and rose at night to pursue his tearful prayer. How did the thief on the cross begin his conversion? With prayer. "Lord," he prayed to Christ, "remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom."—*Luke* 23: 42. St. Paul did the same. He shut himself up for three days and prayed continually.

(*b.*) Tell me yourselves, have you ever seen a sinner that was converted without prayer? Certainly not. All commenced the work of repentance with prayer, and after their conversion zealously practised it. Whereas they were seldom or never seen in the church before their conversion, after it they went to church as often as they could, and prayed with a devotion which edified all; while they formerly almost always omitted family devotions, they afterwards performed them with great fervor, and even deprived themselves of many an hour of sleep to devote it to prayer. Whereas formerly they lived in distraction without any good thoughts, they afterwards very often lifted up their hearts to God and fervently practised mental prayer. Those hours which they had employed in their worldly and sinful life, in dancing, gambling and other amusements, they now devoted to the adoration of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, to the performing of the Way of the Cross, to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, to spiritual reading and pious conversation. Thus all Christians who have entered on the way of penance conducted themselves, and still conduct themselves.

What shall I say of sinners who for days and weeks do not say an *Our Father*, who neglect public worship on Sundays and holidays, or attend it without any devotion and prayer, who not only neglect prayer themselves, but also scoff at those who love to pray? I can only say that so long as they despise prayer they remain in a state of sin and will most certainly perish, unless they change their minds and begin to pray.

PERORATION.

Thus prayer is necessary so all of us, whether we are just or unjust, for the attainment of life everlasting. If we are of the number of the just we must pray, that we may persevere in justice to the end. St. Chrysostom says: "A fish cannot live out of the water, it dies in a very short time; so the soul of man cannot live without prayer; it will gradually die." If we are of the number of sinners we must pray, that we may be converted, for God gives to every man the first grace to pray; all subsequent graces, however, which are required for conversion, generally depend on prayer. If the just man ceases to pray, he will become a sinner; and if the sinner begins to pray, he will become a just man. Let us then pray with fervor, devotion and perseverance, that we may work out our salvation and be saved. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

ORIGIN AND SPIRIT OF PROCESSIONS.

Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is kind.—Ps. 68: 17.

"Hear us, O Lord!" Thus thousands and millions of voices will cry out in the coming week, and with justice. For with what confidence can we pray now, since our Lord Jesus Christ tells us in this day's gospel: *The Father loveth you, and if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.* In the coming week the Church, which is ever anxious and solicitous, not only

for the spiritual, but also for the temporal welfare of her children, invites to united prayer, and thousands of voices exclaim: "Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is kind."

You, young people, who are born in this missionary country, perhaps scarcely know what a beautiful religious life is displayed during this week in Catholic countries; how whole congregations in solemn procession, the cross and banners at the head of it, the pastor in the middle, march forth from God's temple, praying and singing the praises of God, and in this way proceed to a neighboring church. Let us all who for years have not taken part in such a procession go forth from this church, at least in spirit, and unite our prayers with the prayers of thousands and millions of children, young men and maidens, men and women, and thus united, let us ask God for a prosperous year, for the growth and increase of the fruits of the earth. Partly to refute the objections of many who on occasions of processions rave about their uselessness and exaggerated piety, partly to encourage you to join in the prayer of the whole Church, I shall answer the two following questions:

I. What is the origin of processions?
II. In what spirit and disposition of mind must we participate in them?

PART I.

Processions were instituted in the Catholic Church in order to beg Almighty God to grant certain graces and benefits, or to avert some evil, or to give thanks to him for benefits already received.

(*a.*) It is not difficult to trace the origin of processions back to the times of the Old Testament. Did not the Lord command Josue to cause the ark of the covenant to be carried round the city of Jericho for seven days, with prayer and the sound of trumpets? —*Jos.* 6. King David caused the ark of the covenant to be carried in solemn procession to Jerusalem (*II. Kings* 6), and Solomon, his son, had it carried in solemn procession into the new temple.—*III. Kings* 8: 1-6.

(*b.*) The primitive Christians did not make solemn processions, it being impossible on account of the persecutions. But it frequently happened that zealous Christians went to visit the graves of the martyrs during the worst persecutions, either to show their veneration for them or to bury the newly martyred. But when the persecutions ceased and the Christian Church had become

the Church of the world, and religion could be practised not only without fear, but with pomp and splendor, then it was that almost everywhere the sacred relics of the martyrs were removed with great solemnity from their graves and conveyed in solemn procession to the churches. Processions date back at least fifteen hundred years.

(*c.*) Later there were still other reasons which afforded the Christian people occasions for processions. The Almighty frequently visited his sinful people with bad harvests, famine, pestilence, contagious diseases, lengthy wars and devastations. Conscious of their sinfulness, and convinced of the justice of the judgments of God, they humbled themselves and were of opinion that they could not better avert the impending punishment than by imposing public penances upon themselves.

(*d.*) These rogations or processions which occur this week were instituted in the fifth century. Dauphiny, a province of France, was visited by a most terrific earthquake; the country was devastated; the fruits of the earth perished; and droves of famished, savage beasts spread terror and consternation among the inhabitants. St. Mamertus, bishop of Vienne, proclaimed a strict fast for three days, assembled his priests and people, and at their head went in solemn procession for three days, in order to implore God though the intercession of the saints to avert from them the punishment which had become very painful and almost unendurable. And behold! God withdrew his punishing hand, and priests and people returned thanks to God. These processions were repeated every year in grateful remembrance of the deliverance from their calamity, and the custom spread so rapidly that in the year of our Lord 500, therefore thirteen hundred years ago, it was adopted in France, Spain and Italy, and a little later in Germany.

These processions are also a preparation for the Ascension of Christ. Oh, how sublime it is when the whole congregation go forth, their parish priest carrying a particle of the True Cross, or, as it is customary in some places, the Most Holy Sacrament, and proceed round the fields. Then truly they resemble the Apostles, who on this day went from Jerusalem with their Lord and Master to Mount Olivet, where they took leave of him, and he was taken up out of their sight into heaven. We are in good company on that day. Oh, that our Lord would bless us and all the fruits of the earth, as before his going to his Father he blessed his disciples.

(*e.*) Among the most ancient processions we count that on the feast of St. Mark. Although we are unable to determine its date

and origin definitely, we know that it was instituted even before the time of Pope Gregory the Great (607), who caused the custom to be devoutly kept up, in order, as he says, to obtain in some measure the forgiveness of sins. When in the year 590, after a great inundation, a terrible plague snatched thousands away (among others Pope Pelagius II.), Gregory obtained by means of a solemn procession on the feast of St. Mark the cessation of the plague. The procession is made on this day principally to beseech God to avert such evils as war, famine and pestilence. At the same time we pray to him, from whom comes all increase and prosperity, to bless the fields, to avert from them unfavorable weather and all injury and to preserve the country from famine and scarcity of the necessaries of life, trusting that our Father in heaven, who clothes the flowers of the field and feeds the birds of the air, will not forget to give us, his children, our necessary food. You see how holy these processions are, and how ancient is their origin. Oh, that we would always perform them in the spirit in which they were instituted!

PART II.

In what spirit and disposition of mind are we to participate in these processions? Knowing the spirit which called them into existence, we also know the spirit in which they are to be made. In great universal calamities and evils it was—

(*a.*) *The spirit of humility, contrition, and penance,* that manifested itself in these processions. We are all sinners and have justly deserved punishment. We are in the season of spring; the fields and meadows are in good order; there is no plague, no epidemic, no war; the country is prosperous. But we do not know what is before us, what the near future may bring. Already lightning has repeatedly caused destruction in various places, and thunder-storms united with hail have filled many hearts with anxiety. What may happen yet? The promising crops are not garnered. There may be great devastation, hailstorms, inundations, failure of crops, great drought, sickness and contagious diseases among people and cattle. Behold the punishing hand! Let us fervently pray for mercy and pardon. The Litany of the Saints which is said on these days gives us a splendid opportunity for doing so. "Lord, have mercy on us, Christ, have mercy on us. O Lamb of God, spare us!"

(*b.*) We must accompany these processions in *a spirit of penance.* He who lives in the state of sin, and has not the will to amend his life, prays in vain. The words of the gospel apply to

him: "We know that God doth nor hear sinners."—*John* 9: 31. But if the sinner repents of his sins and is resolved to be converted, he obtains by his prayer the grace of God, as the publican in the temple did, for "a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit, a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—*Ps.* 50: 19.

(*c.*) But we should also participate in these processions with *confidence*. With great confidence St. Gregory the Great and St. Mamertus ordered these processions to be made. Animated with the same confidence let us also hope that God will protect us from all these temporal calamities, in so far as it is conducive to our salvation. But as his sinful and guilty children, unworthy of this clemency, we address our prayers with confidence in the merits of our Saviour, to the Father, in the name of the Son, saying: Grant us this, O Father, through Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, our Lord. We also invoke in the Litany the Blessed Virgin, we turn to the holy angels and apostles, martyrs, bishops, confessors, holy virgins and widows, in a word to all the saints and elect of God, to intercede with him for us. And there can be no doubt that such a prayer avails much.

(*d.*) And lastly, it is with *sentiments of gratitude* that our hearts should be filled when we participate in these processions. We gratefully acknowledge that we have often deserved punishments and have mercifully been spared.

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you the two questi ns, why and how we ought to take part in processions. Thev are of very ancient date, and therefore venerable for their age, they are Christian in their purpose and beneficial in their effects, reasons enough for you to esteem them highly and assist at them diligently. But see to it that they become profitable to you; accompany them in a spirit of penance, with true devotion, that God may look down upon you with eyes of mercy, and that the word of Christ may be verified in you: "Ask, and you shall receive." Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

PRAYER, A KEY.

If you ask the Father anything in my name, ***he will give it you.***— *John* 16: 23.

The holy Fathers and spiritual writers employ a multitude of figures and similitudes to represent to us the sublimity, power and efficacy of prayer. Louis of Granada says: "As wax is bleached in the sun and becomes daily cleaner and purer, so it is with the soul which places itself in prayer before God, the sun of justice." St. Chrysostom calls prayer a haven of safety for all who are weather-beaten, an anchor for those who are tossed about on the ocean, a support for the weak, a treasure for the poor, a defense for the rich, a medicine for the sick, and a preservative for the healthy. St. Bernardine compares prayer to a faithful messenger, whom the heavenly king knows well, who easily gains access to him, and who, by his importunity succeeds in moving this compassionate king to send us the necessary relief. As regards myself, I would, with St. Augustine, call prayer a key—

I. Which opens;
II. Which locks.

PART I.

1. Keys are used for the purpose of locking and unlocking houses, rooms, desks, trunks, and other objects which contain something valuable or precious, in order to secure it against thieves and robbers. In this respect prayer resembles a key, for it prevents the approach of all hostile powers to us, so that they cannot injure us *in body or soul.*

Since sin has entered into the world, all nature is opposed to us; the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, constantly threaten us and endeavor to injure us in life and health and property. But we have a key by which we can take our person and all that we possess into a place of safety and preserve ourselves and our possessions from injury and damage. *This key is prayer.* God expressly promises protection and deliverance to those

who call upon him in any necessity. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—*Ps.* 49: 15. St. Chrysostom says: "The power of prayer has already extinguished fire (the three young men in the fiery furnace of Babylon), subdued the fury of lions (Daniel), put an end to wars, gained battles, driven away storms, repulsed evil spirits, opened the gates of heaven, broken the fetters of death, banished sickness, averted calamities, removed and withdrawn all divine punishments and human persecutions." Examples from history: Judith prayed, and the Lord so strengthened her that by an heroic deed she became the saviour of her native city, Bethulia.—*Jud.* 13. The prophet announced death to King Ezechias. He prayed for the prolongation of life; God heard him and granted him fifteen years more.—*IV. Kings* 20: 6. The faithful prayed for Peter in prison, and God sent an angel to deliver him from his captivity.—*Acts* 12. In the year 350 the city of Nisibis was besieged by the Persian king, Sapor II. St. James, bishop of that city, mounted the walls of the city and prayed to the Lord against the unbelievers; God heard his prayer in a miraculous way. Suddenly there came swarms of flies, which attacked the trunks of the elephants, and the ears and nostrils of the horses, rendering them untractable and causing so great a disorder in the camp that Sapor was reluctantly obliged to give up the siege.

2. Prayer is also a key which so effectually locks the door of our heart against all the enemies of our soul, that they cannot enter and rob us of the treasure of grace. "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26: 41. "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."—*Heb.* 4: 16. St. Bernard says: "The power of hell is great indeed; but prayer is more powerful than all evil spirits, because by prayer the soul obtains the assistance of God, which far surpasses all created power." A young man, named Pacho, retired into the desert, there to do penance for his sins. After several years he suffered such violent temptations that he conceived the idea of taking away his own life. With this intention he laid himself down before a cave in which were two hyenas, in order to be devoured by them. But they did not injure him. Then he took a poisonous serpent, bared his breast and irritated the serpent, that its bite might be more deadly; but it had no poison for him. The youth now turned his wrath against heaven and accused God, because he would not let him die. But behold! on a sudden he hears an interior voice which says to him: Wretch! what do you mean? Do you think you can overcome temptations by your own strength. *Pray, pray*, and you will conquer. The youth followed

this advice; he began to pray, and as often as a temptation assailed him, he prayed with great fervor, and came off victorious after each conflict.

3. Keys are used for locking doors on various occasions. Thus—

(*a.*) *In the morning,* when persons leave the house, they lock their doors so that wicked people may not enter and steal. Such a key prayer must be to us. It would certainly be great carelessness to leave the house in the morning without locking the door, but we should act still more carelessly, if we were to go to work without having said our morning prayers. Every day has its dangers, both for body and soul. Many go to work strong, stout and healthy, and when evening comes they have ceased to live. Many meet with accidents; they are injured in life, health and property. Still greater dangers threaten the soul. The world, the flesh, and the devil pursue us and prepare for us many and great temptations. How easily it may happen that we commit sin, lose God's grace, render ourselves deserving of eternal damnation. Is it not then necessary that in the morning we lock ourselves with the key of prayer, that is, recommend our body and soul to the keeping of God and ask him to avert from us all that might injure us for time and eternity?

(*b.*) *In the evening,* when we carefully lock all approaches to the house, but especially the outside door, in order to protect ourselves and personal property from injury and loss. Such a key again must be prayer. Night is nobody's friend; a great many accidents occur at night; no less dangerous is night-time for the soul. Who can count the sins that are committed in the darkness of the night? How many will be eternally lost on account of these sins! Must we not again make use of the spiritual key, prayer, and urgently ask God to protect our body and soul during the night?

(*c.*) *Frequently during the day,* as often as we leave the house and no other person is at home. Such a key must prayer be for us as often as we leave the house during the day, in order to attend to our business and have dealings with others. In many religious orders one of the rules is that the members, before going out, should visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, in order to commend themselves to his protection. You need not visit the Blessed Sacrament before you go out; I do not even ask you to kneel down and say a prayer, but you should never omit to recollect yourselves interiorly and by some pious ejaculation commend yourselves to the protection and grace of God. Only thus can you hope to be preserved from all evils of body and soul.

Part II.

1. Keys are not only used for locking, but also for unlocking. God has two great treasuries; in the one there are all temporal, and in the other all spiritual goods. Prayer is the key that unlocks both these treasuries.

(*a.*) *The treasury of temporal goods.* We have different necessities for our temporal life, we need health, food, clothes, shelter, God's blessing for our business and undertakings. God gives us all these things if we ask him with faith and confidence, for Christ says: *If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.* Whatever it may be, temporal or eternal, God will give it to us, if we ask him. Open the Bible, and you will find countless proofs of this consoling truth. God made the manna fall in the desert at the prayer of the Israelites for forty years, and water come forth from a rock to quench their thirst. Anna prayed, and God removed her sterility and gave her Samuel and other children.—*I. Kings* 1. Solomon prayed and God gave him wisdom, as to no other mortal, and all the goods of life in abundance. The Apostles had labored all the night and taken nothing, but when, at the word of Christ, and with confidence in his divine power, they let down their net, they enclosed so great a multitude of fishes that it broke.

(*b.*) *The treasury of spiritual goods.* Spiritual goods are all those graces which we need for our purification and sanctification, for the practice of virtues, for perseverance in justice and for obtaining life everlasting. If we pray, God gives us all these graces, and he gives them more readily than temporal goods, because they are for the salvation of our soul. St. Augustine says: "Prayer is a key, which opens heaven for our salvation. The moment our prayer ascends to God, the grace we ask descends." It was prayer joined with alms that obtained the grace of faith for the Centurion Cornelius. "Thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God."—*Acts* 10: 31. Thus prayer is truly a heavenly key.

2. He who has the key of the house, room, or trunk, can unlock, no matter who he is, master or servant, mistress or maid, man or woman.

(*a.*) Herein again prayer resembles a key. Every one, rich or poor, high or low, just or unjust, can approach God in prayer, and find a friendly reception. The centurion at Capharnaum, the royal officer, the woman with the issue of blood, the woman of

Chanaan, the blind man by the roadside, the ten lepers, and numberless others, had recourse to Christ in their necessities and were heard. He does not even wait till the needy come to him, but he invites them, in these affectionate words: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. He graciously receives the greatest sinners, if they are repentant, as we see was the case as regards the Samaritan woman, the adulteress brought before him in the temple, Zacheus, and the penitent thief on the cross.

(*b.*) This is also a great consolation for us. The great ones of this world are not easy to be approached, and even if you are admitted to their presence, you will hardly ever find a favorably inclined ear; you are either flatly refused or put off with some shallow excuse to a more opportune time. It is not so with God; all, whoever they are, may come to him full of confidence and present to him their petitions. Even the consciousness of our being sinners, of our want of merit, must not deter us nor forbid us his presence; if we have a humble and contrite heart, he will receive us as affectionately as the father in the gospel received his prodigal son on his return.

3. If a key is to open, it must fit the lock, it must be put in rightly and turned. It is so with prayer; it must be performed well, that God may receive and hear it. Christ tells us in the gospel of this day how this is to be done. *If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.* The efficacy of our prayer depends on this, that we pray *in the name of Jesus.* But what is it to pray in the name of Jesus? It is—

(*a.*) To pray *with confidence in the merits of Jesus.* We are poor sinners, not worthy to approach God and to ask graces of him. Only through Christ can we have access to God, and only through his mediation and merits will our prayer be heard. We must consider this well as often as we pray; we must profoundly humble ourselves because of our nothingness, unworthiness, insignificance and sinfulness, and we must hope to obtain the object of our requests through the merits of Jesus.

(*b.*) *With fervor.* As often as Christ prayed, he was all recollection, all devotion, full of the most glowing fervor. We must endeavor to pray in this manner, and, keeping all distractions away from us as much as possible, direct our thoughts to God and pray with fervent devotion and attention. We cannot expect that God will listen to our prayer if we pay no attention to it ourselves. A cold, distracted prayer is but mocking God.

(*c.*) *With confidence.* It would be an insult to God to pray with diffidence, since he has promised most emphatically that he will hear our prayer, and he is powerful enough to keep his promise. He is more ready and desirous to give than we are to receive. Let us not doubt this power and goodness. "He that wavereth (in prayer) is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind; therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—*James* 1: 6, 7.

(*d.*) *With resignation to the will of God.* Thus Christ prayed: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."—*Matt.* 26: 39. Thus we must also pray, and leave it entirely to God when and how he will hear us. This much is certain that God always hears us, if otherwise we pray well, but it is uncertain whether he will give us just that which we ask; for if what we ask would not be useful, but detimental, he gives in place of it something that is good and wholesome. We must leave it to God when he will hear us, for he knows best at what time the granting of our request will be advantageous to us.

PERORATION.

Prayer, as you have heard, is a key that locks and unlocks. You frequently take the keys into your hand, for you need them for locking and unlocking. Do the same with prayer. Pray often, for prayer is as necessary as breath, because of yourselves you can do nothing and are dependent on God in your corporal and spiritual necessities. But pray always as you ought, with a lively knowledge of your unworthiness and with humility, with interior recollection and devotion, with confidence and resignation, with a pure or at least a penitent heart, for this is to pray in the name of Jesus. If you pray thus in his name, God will be pleased with your prayer, and it will be a key which will open for you the treasuries of God and finally heaven. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

HOW WE MUST PRAY, THAT WE MAY BE HEARD.

Ask, and you shall receive.—John 16: 24.

Our Lord assures us again and again in the gospel of this day, that God, his heavenly Father, will hear our prayer. But that this may be done we must pray well. For only a prayer that has the qualities which God requires can claim to be heard; only the good prayer enriches us with heavenly treasures of grace and helps us to salvation. As we read in the gospel, the Scribes and Pharisees prayed much and often, not only in the synagogues, but they also stood at the corners of the streets and prayed (*Matt.* 6: 5); but their prayer was useless, because they prayed badly. If we wish our prayer to be acceptable to God and to draw his graces and blessings upon us, we must perform it in the right manner. On this subject I shall speak to you to-day at greater length and answer the question: How must we pray that God may hear our prayer? We must pray—

I. With devotion;
II. With humility;
III. With confidence.

PART I.

We must pray *with devotion.* We pray with devotion—

1. *When we pay the necessary attention* and direct our thoughts to God. This is the nature of prayer, which is a conversation with God. When engaged in conversation we always turn towards the person to whom we speak; thus we must turn towards God and direct our attention to him when we speak with him in prayer. He, therefore, who prays and has his thoughts somewhere else instead of with God does not pray at all, for he speaks not with God, but with that to which he directs his attention. To such a one the words of the Lord apply: "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."—*Matt.* 15: 8. It may indeed happen, and frequently does happen, that

our thoughts wander away from God and are turned to other things. In this case we must, as soon as we notice the distraction, recall our thoughts, and direct them again to God. If we do not do this the distractions would be voluntary, they would offend God and lessen the merit to be gained by prayer.

2. *When we pray with a pious disposition of mind.* To pray with attention may not be to pray with devotion. But if at prayer we are penetrated with a lively sentiment of the majesty, the greatness and the infinite perfections of God on the one hand, and of our misery, sinfulness and our infinite distance from him on the other, and on that account are filled with veneration, love and gratitude towards God, as well as with humility, contrition and good resolutions, we pray with a pious disposition of mind, and consequently with devotion. This pious disposition need not consist in sensible feelings, it is enough if it exists in the will. He who ardently wishes to pray well, and humbles himself, prays well, though he may experience no sweetness and consolation, but rather distaste, coldness and dryness. If the will is good, all is good.

A good preparation is necessary for a devout prayer. "Before prayer prepare thy soul: and be not as a man that tempteth God."—*Ecclus.* 18: 23. Distractions during prayer arise because we are not recollected, but commence our prayer with a heart full of temporal thoughts and cares. Recollect yourselves always before you begin to pray; direct your thoughts to God and ask him to give you the grace of a good and advantageous prayer. If you are distracted, recall your wandering thoughts, as soon as you notice the distraction, and do this as often as distractions assail you. At the end of the prayer, especially if it is long, repent of your wilful distractions and ask God to forgive the faults you have committed and to supply for them through the merits of Jesus Christ and his saints.

PART II.

We must pray *with humility*, that is, with a lively sense and knowledge of our unworthiness, insignificance, and nothingness. Humility is an essential quality of prayer; without it prayer loses all meaning. What do we do when we pray? We either *praise and adore God*, or, *we give him thanks*, or, *we petition him for benefits*. When we praise and adore him, we confess that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, that in comparsion with him we are nothing, that we are dependent on him, and entirely subject to him. Is not this an expression of humility? When we thank him, we confess that all that we have and are is a pure gift of his bounty,

that we are not able to do anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, and that all our sufficiency is from above. We acknowledge our dependence on him, and his dominion over us. Is not this an expression of humility? When we ask him for a favor, a grace or a benefit, we acknowledge that we are impotent creatures and are unable to relieve our own necessities. Is not this an expression of humility? He therefore who does not humble himself at prayer, but cherishes pride in his heart, does not pray, but only gives himself the appearance of prayer and mocks God. Hence we need not be astonished that God rejects the prayer of the proud and receives the prayer of the humble.

Jesus gives us a clear idea of this in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Both go up to the temple of Jerusalem in order to pray in the place of grace. The Pharisee delivers a panegyric on himself, saying: "O God, I give thee thanks, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week. I give tithes of all that I possess." But the publican, in the knowledge of his sinfulness, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but filled with humility and contrition, struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner?" What was the effect of the prayer of these two men? The humble publican found grace, but the proud Pharisee was rejected, with his prayer, for Christ adds, "every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." And St. James says: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace to the humble."—*James* 4: 6.

Be careful, then, lest pride and vanity deprive you of all fruit of prayer. Humble yourselves before the infinite majesty of God as often as you pray, acknowledge yourselves as miserable creatures, who have nothing and can do nothing, as sinners deserving only displeasure and punishment. Manifest your humility also outwardly; do not come to church with vain and extravagantly fine clothes, striving to please men; but honor God, kneel down and fold your hands devoutly. St. Gregory says: "He offers up to God a true prayer who knows that he is but dust." The more profoundly you humble yourselves, the more acceptable your prayer will be to God and the more profitable to yourselves; you will receive every grace you stand in need of, for God can refuse nothing when true humility petitions.

Part III.

We must pray with *confidence.*

1. We may confidently hope that God will near our prayer and make us partake of his blessings, for he is infinitely powerful and good, he therefore can and will give us what we ask. Jesus Christ repeatedly, and in the plainest words, has assured us that our prayer will be heard: thus twice in the gospel of this day; also in the gospel of St. Matthew (7: 7), "Ask, and it shall be given you"; again, in St. Mark's gospel (11: 24), "All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." But what must still more increase our confidence are the infinite merits of our divine Redeemer. Though we have no merit to which we can appeal, in order to move God to hear our prayer, yet we have the merits of his Son, and because of them, we may expect every blessing with the greatest hope and assurance. For this reason the Church concludes all her prayers with these or similar words: *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Add to this, that Jesus Christ is our advocate and mediator, "who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—*Rom.* 8: 34. How could our heavenly Father refuse a request which his well-beloved presents? Therefore the Apostle admonishes us to present our petitions with filial confidence: "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."—*Heb.* 4: 16.

2. *We are not always heard,* **but the reason is—**

(*a.*) *Because often we do not pray well.* God helps him who helps himself. If we take no trouble, we are not in earnest in prayer; we have no real desire to be heard. He who, for instance, asks for the forgiveness of his sins, but does not give up bad company, does not go to confession; he who prays for his daily bread, but incurs immoderate expenses and is an idler and a sluggard, has no sincere desire that God will hear his prayer; and when on the part of man this desire is wanting, then, on the part of God, the hearing of our prayer is also wanting. How could God hear people who are always his enemies and never cease to crucify Christ anew by their continued sinful life? To them the words of the Lord apply: "When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you, and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear; for your hands are full of blood."—*Is.* 1: 15.

(*b.*) *Because we pray for something detrimental to our salvation.* In our short-sightedness we frequently do not know what is good and wholesome for us; hence it comes that we often pray for dangerous things. A poor man prays for prosperity; a sick man for health. The object of these and similar petitions is good in itself; for many, however, it would prove detrimental; they would, if their request were granted, forget God, fall into sin and perish eternally. Can God hear such petitioners? Impossible, for God is our Father and wishes what is best for us. He cannot give us a scorpion which in our foolishness we mistake for an egg. God sometimes does not hear us, because he loves us and will exercise his mercy towards us. Hence it is an important duty to pray with resignation to the will of God, in all temporal things leaving it to God whether he will hear us, and how. Our model must be Christ on Mount Olivet, who said: "Not my will, but thine be done."—*Luke* 22: 43.

(*c.*) *Because we do not persevere in prayer.* There are many Christians who, when they are not heard at once in their necessities, lose courage and say: "It is no use to pray." Such Christians do wrong. God has assured us that he will hear us, but he has not appointed the time when he will do so; he frequently defers the granting of our request, as in his wisdom he thinks fit. Thus the prayer of the centurion at Capharnaum was heard immediately, whilst the woman of Canaan was obliged to pray a long time before she was heard.—*Matt.* 15. When God defers the granting of our requests, he has the best reasons for it; he does so to afford us an occasion of practising various virtues, such as humility, confidence, obedience and patience; or because that which we ask would not be wholesome for us now, but detrimental; and lastly, that we may the better appreciate and make use of the graces and benefits granted. He who does not persevere in prayer need not expect to be heard; he offends God since he is not resigned to his holy will and wants, as it were, to dictate to him as to when he ought to hear him, and therefore we need not wonder that he is not heard. Hence we must persevere in prayer. What God does not give us to-day, he may give us to-morrow.

PERORATION.

Pray with *devotion*. Direct your heart to God, respect his majesty, humbly acknowledge the wants of your soul, and earnestly desire to be assisted by the goodness of God; perform with affection and fervor all actions connected with the service of God. Pray with *humility*, acknowledge yourselves before God

as sinners not worthy to appear in his presence. Pray with *confidence;* rest assured that God will hear you, if the object of your prayer is for his honor and your salvation. Be not discouraged when your prayer is not heard at once, but continue it zealously till it pleases God to grant your request. If you pray thus, you pray well. God will accept your prayer favorably and give you what you petition for, according to the promise of Christ: "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke* 11: 9.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

WHEN AND WHERE WE ARE TO PRAY.

Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.—John 16: 13.

They say that there is a panacea which cures all kinds of diseases and restores health. I doubt very much whether this is true, but this much is certain, that religion possesses a panacea against all evils, and that is prayer. Amid all corporal and spiritual evils such as sickness, pestilence, poverty, destitution, tribulations, persecutions, misfortunes of every kind, temptations and dangers of salvation, we are supported by the prayer which we offer in the name of Jesus to God, our heavenly Father. Moreover, prayer is a universal means for obtaining all the graces and benefits which we need for the present and the future life; these are imparted to us by prayer. Christ in the gospel of this day characterizes prayer as a panacea, when he says: *If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.* St. Bonaventure says: "The power of prayer is wonderful; it procures all that is useful, and averts all that is injurious." What should we love to do better than to pray? Should we not devote all our leisure time to prayer? Should we not frequently recollect ourselves and raise our hearts to God, not only at home and in the church, but also abroad under the canopy of heaven? In order to increase our zeal for prayer let us consider to-day the two following questions:

I. When must we pray?
II. Where must we pray?

PART I.

1. According to the admonition of Christ (*Luke* 18: 1), we must *pray always*. This is not to be taken literally, since we cannot pray always, for we must also work and fulfil the duties of our state of life. We can, however, comply with Christ's injunction according to the spirit—

(*a.*) *If we frequently raise our heart to God and offer up to him all our labors, joys and sufferings.* All the saints were accustomed at their work frequently to recollect themselves and to offer up short ejaculatory prayers. This salutary practice is also possible for us. We can frequently during the day think of the salvation of our soul and make pious ejaculations, such as these: Jesus, mercy; Jesus, all for thy love; Jesus, for thee I live; Jesus, for thee I die; Jesus, to thee I belong living or dead. Holy Mary, pray for me! Holy Mary, I commend myself to thee, body and soul! Such ejaculations obtain for us many graces, and moreover, have the advantage of preserving us from levity and of increasing our fervor more and more.

(*b.*) If we sanctify our actions by *a good intention.* The Apostle exhorts us to this in these words: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all things for the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31. If we make a good intention in the morning, it will last, unless it be interrupted by a bad one, the whole day, and will make all our thoughts, words and works meritorious before God. Therefore we pray as it were the whole day because our heart is raised to God. It is, however, advisable frequently during the day to renew the good intention, especially in more important undertakings, or when we are tempted by vanity or impatience. This we can do by these or similar words: "My God, all for thy love."

2. *There are different occasions on which we must pray.*

(*a.*) *In temptations.* "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26: 41. He who in temptation has not at once recourse to God and does not invoke his help, exposes himself to the greatest danger of falling into sin. We have a sad example in Peter, who, because he did not watch and pray, denied his Lord and Master three times. St. Francis of Sales, very appropriately remarks: "As soon as you begin to experience a

temptation within you, do as timid little children, who when they see a savage beast run to their father and mother, or at least cry for help: so hasten also to God at once and ask his help, grace and mercy."

(*b.*) *In private and public calamities and concerns.* Herein also prayer proves to be the most efficacious means for obtaining divine help. Was it not by prayer that Moses won his victory over Amelec?—*Ex.* 17. Was it not prayer that strengthened the arm of Judith to cut off the head of Holofernes and to save her city from destruction? Was it not owing to the prayer of the first Christians that God sent an angel to Peter in prison and set him at liberty? Yes, prayer secures for us consolation and help in every tribulation. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—*Ps.* 49: 15.

2. *We must pray at certain times.*

(*a.*) *In the morning,* before we go to work. We should give thanks to God for his protection over us during the night, and ask him to take us under his protection during the day and to avert from us everything that might injure us in body or soul, promising him to spend the day for his honor and the salvation of our soul. Let us never neglect to say our morning prayers.

(*b.*) *In the evening.* We must again return thanks to God for all the benefits of body and soul which he has bestowed upon us during the day, examine our conscience, repent of our faults, offer up our thoughts, words, and deeds in union with the merits of Christ, and commend ourselves to his holy keeping. Let us never neglect our evening prayers.

(*c.*) *Before and after meals.* Food and drink come from God. If he should withdraw his blessing from our labors and exertions, we should fare like the disciples of Christ, who labored the whole night and took nothing. We should consider this and pray devoutly before and after meals. During meals many sins are committed, such as intemperance, gratification of the appetite, unbecoming discourses, and quarrels. In order to avoid these sins, we should never sit down to table without prayer. When the body is well fed and filled with meat and drink it is more accessible to the temptations of impurity, anger and sloth; therefore we must pray, that we enter not into temptation and fall. Never neglect to say grace before and after meals.

(*a.*) *At the sound of the Angelus.* For centuries it has been the custom in the Catholic Church to ring the church or chapel bell three times a day, in the morning, at noon, and at nightfall. This is a devotion to keep before the minds of men the great truth of the Incarnation. Let us say the *Angelus* three times a day with great devotion, remembering thereby, with a grateful heart, the inexpressible grace of the Incarnation of Christ and our Redemption. They are not good Christians who, at the ringing of the *Angelus*, do not uncover their heads, but go on working, eating, talking, etc. Do not imitate them.

PART II.

We can and must pray *everywhere.* God is near us everywhere; everywhere he hears the sighs of our hearts; everywhere he pays attention to what we say to him. St. Chrysostom says: "You may walk in the market-place, and pray. You may be in the shop, and offer up your soul to God. A servant making purchases in the market, a cook in the kitchen, and other servants, if (without their fault) they cannot go to church, can pray well at home. For God despises no place, but requires only a devout heart and a sober soul." Thus the patriarch Jacob prayed in the field, Manasses in a dark dungeon, Ezechias on his sick-bed, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonas in the whale's belly, Job on the dunghill, the three young men in the fiery furnace at Babylon. And the prayer which was offered in these different places was acceptable to God and was heard. Christ himself gives us a beautiful example; he prayed, not only in the temple at Jerusalem and in the synagogues, but also in the desert; on mountains, whither he repaired at nightfall; in the garden of Olives, and even on the cross. Since everything you see in the heavens and upon earth reminds you of the omnipotence, wisdom and goodness of God, you should at least occasionally direct pious thoughts to him and pray.

2. *But pray chiefly in the church.* You have serious reasons for so doing.

(*a.*) All people, even the most uncivilized, have temples where they meet and pray. They congregated from the whole country and the four corners of the globe to Jerusalem, to offer sacrifice and to pray in the temple. Christ, when a boy of twelve years of age, visited this temple and came afterwards every year, and called it expressly a house of prayer.—*Matt.* 21 : 13. The first Christians even at the time of bloody persecutions, had several

places, especially the catacombs, which they used as churches. When the time of persecution was over, they built churches everywhere, in which they assembled daily, but especially on Sundays and holidays for the celebration of the holy sacrifice and for prayer. Thus Pagans, Jews, and Christians are alike in this, that they have temples in which to worship God and to adore him.

(*b.*) God is indeed everywhere present, but *in a special manner* in churches. Here, as a rule, he grants more graces than anywhere else. He promised this to Solomon, when he said to him: "I have sanctified this house which thou hast built to put my name there for ever; and *my eyes and my heart shall be there always.—III. Kings* 9: 3. But Catholic churches especially are houses of God in the strictest sense of the word, for here Christ is truly present in the Blessed Eucharist, crying to us: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28.

(*c.*) The church is the house of prayer in particular, because every thing that is done there inspires us with devotion. Here holy mass is offered and Jesus dwells in the tabernacle; here we see many holy pictures which awaken within us wholesome thoughts and draw our heart heavenward; here we listen to the word of God, and to sacred music; we behold the grand and sublime worship of God with is beautiful, significant ceremonies. Will not all this enliven the spirit of devotion, cause us to pray more fervently, and produce in us holy sentiments and resolutions? Does not history testify that even infidels, freethinkers and obstinate sinners, at the celebration of the divine mysteries, were most deeply affected, and, as if influenced by a higher power, prostrated themselves and prayed with emotion?

(*d.*) *We are bound to profess our faith publicly on certain occasions, and to give a good example to our fellow-men.* Is not this done in a special manner by frequently visiting our churches? Is not he who is seldom or never seen in church looked upon as an infidel or freethinker, or a bad Catholic? And will not his example, if he is a father, or in a position of authority, have bad consequences for children, dependents and fellow-Christians? Will they not also neglect prayer and public worship? Do you not call this giving scandal?

PERORATION.

Do not suffer yourselves to be led into error by those who say that one can pray everywhere and that it is not necessary to go

to church. Those who talk thus are abandoned Catholics, who neglect their salvation, and you may rest assured that elsewhere they pray as little as in the church. Love to go to church, as all good Christians have done at all times and still do, especially on Sundays and holidays, when you are obliged by a strict law of the Church to do so. Deport yourselves at church respectfully, modestly and quietly, pray heartily, that you may glorify God, edify your fellow-Christians, and receive grace for time and eternity. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

Epistle. *I. Peter* 4: 7-11. Dearly beloved: Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

WE MUST BE PRUDENT AND WATCHFUL IN PRAYER, AND MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

On the second and third Sunday after Easter we had lessons taken from the first epistle of St. Peter. In these the prince of the Apostles exhorted us to follow the steps of Christ and, according to his example, to abstain from every sin in word and deed, especially not to return evil for evil. Then he admonished us, being pilgrims and having no lasting city here, to refrain ourselves from all carnal desires, to lead a good, honest Christian life, so that the enemies and adversaries of our faith may not be able to lay anything evil to our charge, and conscientiously to fulfil our duties towards every one, whether our superiors or our equals. The lesson for to-day is again a portion of the first epistle of St. Peter, and contains wholesome instructions which we will consider a little more closely. They may be reduced to two, viz.,

I. Be prudent and watchful in prayer;
II. Always love one another.

PART I.

St. Peter introduces his instructions in the epistle of this day with these words: *The end of all is at hand,* referring to the last judgment, which will take place at the end of the world. This judgment, and with it the end of the world, he means to say, is approaching nearer and nearer, nay, we may say that it is near at hand, because we shall soon die, and then the world will cease for us; judgment will come, and the sentence passed upon us will be the same as at the last day.

1. The Apostle crying out to us: *Be prudent,* refers to the precautions we ought to take to ensure that death and judgment may have a favorable issue for us. The question is: How must we herein manifest our prudence? Chiefly—

(*a.*) *In not loving immoderately anything earthly.* All things whatsoever the worldling esteems so highly and aspires to with so great a desire, such as money and property, honors and dignities, joys and amusements, are perishable; and moreover we cannot take anything with us to the other world. Every one, the king and the laborer, the millionaire and the beggar, must say with Job (17: 1): "Only the grave remaineth for me." In like manner what the earth has and gives does not profit us for eternity. If you have millions, you cannot buy heaven with it; though you occupy the highest position, the divine Judge will summon you as well as the lowest person to give an account of your life. Yes, temporal goods are in many ways an obstacle to man, for they draw his mind from God and eternal things and rivet him to the world; they inflame evil desires in his heart and allure him to many sins. Therefore the Apostle says: "They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition."—*I. Tim.* 6: 9. The same may be said of all earthly goods. It would therefore be very foolish for us to have an inordinate desire after these things. Christian prudence requires that we share the sentiment of the Apostle, who says: "The time is short, it remaineth that . . . they that use this world be as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away."—*I. Cor.* 7: 29, 31.

(*b.*) *In patiently bearing everything painful and disagreeable.* Though tribulations and sufferings displease human nature, they are very wholesome for us, since they detach our heart from the world and draw it towards heaven; they furnish us with occasions for the exercise of humility, patience and fervor in prayer and many other virtues; they blot out temporal punishment and

increase our merits for heaven. The tribulations and sufferings which we meet with in this earthly life are not so much a punishment, as graces from God, and numberless people, especially the innocent and penitent, owe their salvation to them. St. John of the Cross says: "If God should impart to you the power of raising the dead to life, he would give you less than if he made you suffer. You would owe him great thanks for the gift of miracles; but when he makes you suffer, he becomes your debtor, provided you suffer with patience." How imprudent then are those Christians who complain and murmur at what ought to be the object of their joy and ambition. Truly, they resemble a sick person who refuses to take the medicine which would cure him because it is bitter.

(*c.*) *In doing everything required for our salvation.* We must carefully shun every sin, and if we have sinned, do penance without delay. Divine revelation tells us that nothing defiled can enter into heaven and that holy penance is the only plank of safety for the sinner. We must also practice the Christian virtues and good works, for heaven is a reward which is given only to those who merit it by zeal in doing good. The servant who left his talent unemployed was severely reprimanded by his lord, and was cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt.* 25: 26-30. Therefore be prudent and "labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—*II. Pet.* 1: 10.

2. St. Peter admonishes us also to *watchfulness*, when he says: *Watch.* There is scarcely any obligation which Christ inculcates more frequently and emphatically than that of watching. "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Matt.* 26; 41. "Watch ye, because you know now at what hour your Lord will come."—*Matt.* 24: 42. "Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour."—*Matt.* 25: 13. "Watch ye, praying at all times."—*Luke* 21: 36. "Our life being so full of temptations, that it may justly be called a temptation itself, watchful circumspection and prayer are necessary, that we may not fall into temptation." *St. Bernard* says, Watchfulness consists in this—

(*a.*) *That we pay attention to all we think, speak and do.* Various thoughts, pictures, representations and desires arise in our hearts; among these many are not good but bad. We must have a watchful eye over ourselves, that we may fight against and keep down everything that is bad and inclines us to sin. We must guard the tongue, for he who does not do this says many things which are sinful and which he will afterwards bitterly regret. Before

we act, we must reflect whether that which we are about to undertake is according to the will of God, otherwise we expose ourselves to the danger of being led into sin by self-love or the bad example of others.

(*b.*) *That we guard our senses, especially our eyes.* The outward senses are the doors by which the enemies of salvation enter into our hearts and cause great havoc, unless they are watched and closed. How much evil do the eyes cause, unless they are carefully guarded! The eye was the cause of the first sin, which brought so much misery and wretchedness on all mankind. Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, and this look inflamed within her the desire after the fruit, and induced her to stretch out her hand to pluck it and to eat it.—*Gen.* 3. David was a man according to the heart of God, but he saw a woman washing herself and did not restrain his eyes. This glance conquered him and made him an adulterer and murderer. Solomon was pious and God-fearing, but he fell so low that he contaminated himself with idolatry. The concupiscence of the eye was the cause of his fall, as he acknowledges himself in these words: "Whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not."—*Eccltes.* 2: 10.

(*c.*) *That we watch everything that happens without us and avoid the occasions of sin.* "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—*I. John* 2: 16. The world excites to impurity, avarice, pride, and, in fact, to all sins. It pretends to be our best friend, but always studies our ruin; it endeavors to infatuate and to lull our conscience to sleep by excusing all vices and representing them even as virtues. He who is not continually on his guard against it falls into its snares and perishes. Thus the pious descendants of Seth were corrupted as soon as they had intercourse with the wicked posterity of Cain and entered with them into matrimonial alliances. Dina, Jacob's daughter, fell a victim to seduction, because she went once into wicked Sichem. Even St. Peter, the zealous apostle, when in company with the enemies of Christ, fell most lamentably. Beware of the world, be not intimate with persons of the opposite sex or with irreligious people. Avoid balls and theatres and all occasions of sin, that you may not suffer the loss of your souls.

3. The Apostle exhorts us to prayer: *Watch in prayer.* After baptism there is nothing more necessary for those who have arrived at the age of discretion than prayer. "We believe that no one attains salvation unless God calls him to it; that no one who is called works out his salvation unless God assists him, and that no one deserves this assistance unless he prays." If we con-

sider, on the one hand, that man can do nothing without the assistance of God, and on the other hand, that God commonly gives his help only to him that prays, it naturally follows that prayer it absolutely necessary for salvation. It is necessary—

(*a.*) *To the sinner for his conversion.* If a sinner is to be converted, it cannot be by his own power; he needs the grace of God for it. Now it is certain that God gives the first grace of conversion without prayer, but that the subsequent graces by which conversion is effected are given only to those who pray fervently. If therefore a sinner does not pray, he remains in sin and perishes. We know that all sinners, who have been truly converted, prayed, for example: David, Paul, Magdalen.

(*b.*) *To the just man for perseverance in goodness.* So long as we live we are exposed to temptations, and no one is so confirmed in grace that he could never lose it. Even great saints succumbed to temptation and sinned, as David and Peter. The most necessary means for the overcoming of temptations is prayer: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Certain pious hermits in the desert consulted one day among themselves as to what exercise is most necessary to every Christian for the attainment of life everlasting. And they very soon agreed that it is no other than prayer. They therefore resolved that each of them should often pray with David: "Incline unto my aid, O God. O Lord, make haste to help me." St. Alphonsus says: "These pious men were perfectly right, for if we call upon the Lord without ceasing, we shall infallibly be saved, but if we cease to pray, we shall infallibly perish." There is nothing for which we ought to be so solicitous as for prayer; if we persevere therein and are prudent and watchful, the last things, death and judgment, will lose their terror for us.

Part II.

St. Peter admonishes us to mutual love, and teaches us how we are to exercise it.

1. *But before all things have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins.*

(*a.*) The love of our neighbor, together with the love of God, is the principal commandment and a sign of the disciples of Christ. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you."—*John* 15: 12. "By this shall all men know

that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John* 13: 35. Therefore St. Peter also says that, *before all things*, we should love one another. This ought to convince us of the necessity of the love of our neighbor. If it were wanting to us, we should leave the principal commandment unfulfilled, and therefore could not call ourselves his disciples. And what would be the consequence? This, that we could not be saved. "He that loveth not, abideth in death."—*I. John* 3: 14.

(*b.*) According to the word of the Apostle, we must love one another *always*, that is, at all times, and under all circumstances. The love of our neighbor is grounded on the love of God and must, like it, be unchangeable. Our love must also resemble that with which Christ loved us; but the Apostle says of him, that, having loved his own, he loved them to the end.—*John* 13: 1. Christians who love their neighbor only as long as they find pleasure in him, or receive or expect something from him, have only a natural love, which is of no value before God. "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this?—*Matt.* 5: 46, 47. He who loves his neighbor in a Christian manner, loves him also when he becomes poor, when he loses honor and dignity, when beauty vanishes, nay, even when he is injured by him. Examine and see whether your love has these qualities.

(*c.*) *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.* These words may be taken in a double sense. They may mean: When we truly love our neighbor we are patient and indulgent in regard to his faults and forgive them; though the number may be very great, we conceal them when we have not a particular obligation to reveal them, and we excuse them as much as we can when they are spoken of. This is founded on the nature of love, which consists in benevolence, and is regulated according to the principle, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. He who does not bear the faults of others patiently, but publishes them unnecessarily. and will not hear of forgiving, is destitute of the love of his neighbor. It may also mean this: If we love our neighbor and treat him amicably and indulgently, this love covers our own sins; God will pardon them, according to the words of Christ: "If you will forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses."—*Matt.* 6: 14. Ought not this to be an incentive for us to love our neighbor?

2. *Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring.*

(*a.*) Hospitality in the early times of the Church was a necessary exercise of Christian love, for at that time there were no inns or hotels for the entertainment of strangers and travelers. The Christians were obliged to travel when they preached the gospel, or to escape persecutions, or for some other purpose. On such journeys they found no shelter with Jews or Gentiles, because these were ill-disposed towards them. Hence the admonition of the apostle that Christians should use hospitality one towards another, and for the sake of Jesus give them food and drink and whatever else they need.

(*b.*) Hospitality can still be practised, for even now there are some who are glad to avail themselves of an invitation, as they have not the means to put up at an hotel. Then there are always some to whom we can and must show our esteem, good-will and affection by inviting them to table. Moreover, hospitality is a means to form, confirm, or renew friendships, and to accomplish some good work. If a rich man secludes himself and eats his meals alone and has no other guests than a cat or a dog, he is a narrow-minded, selfish man. It is true, not every one can invite to table, but he can at least be friendly towards strangers, the poor, sick, needy and afflicted, and in word and deed render them many an act of kindness and charity, that the words of Christ may be verified in him: "I was a stranger, and you took me in." —*Matt.* 25: 35.

3. Lastly, St. Peter requires of us other acts of charity: *As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ.*

(*a.*) In the Apostolic times the Holy Ghost frequently imparted to the newly-converted Christians extraordinary supernatural gifts. Some received the gift of wisdom, others the grace of healing, others the working of miracles, others the gift of prophecy.—*I. Cor.* 12: 4-10. These gifts were to be employed for the dissemination and confirmation of faith, for the edification of Christians, and for the general good; for this reason St. Peter says: Let each serve the other according to the measure of grace he has received, let every one try to be a good steward of God, who does not bury his talent, but puts it out at interest, who does not leave the gifts and goods of God unemployed, but employs them for his own advantage and that of others, that thus he may promote and increase the honor of God.

(*b.*) We must also serve our neighbor according to our ability. There is no one who is not able to serve others sometimes and to show them kindness. If he possesses power and authority, let him use it to defend the oppressed; if he is learned, let him give good counsel; if he possesses knowledge and wisdom, let him instruct the ignorant; if he is blessed with the goods of the earth, let him relieve the poor and needy. We can often do a great act of charity by a small favor, by a word of intercession. There are opportunities to correct a sinner, to warn a careless brother, to console the sad, to save a soul. To all these things we are obliged by the precept of fraternal charity.

PERORATION.

These are the salutary instructions which St. Peter gives us in the lesson of this day; follow them. Be prudent and make provision in time, that you may receive a favorable sentence at the judgment which will decide your fate for all eternity. Watch and pray, that you may fight a good fight and gain the victory over all the enemies of your salvation. Love one another, and manifest your love by doing good to all men when, where and how you can. Have the honor of God before your eyes and glorify his adorable name in word and deed, that he may recognize you as his faithful servants and call you to the joys of heaven. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

GOSPEL. *John* 15: 26, 27; 16: 1-4. At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember what I told you.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE PROPHECY OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS DISCIPLES.

The words of the gospel of this day, like those of the three preceding Sundays, are a small portion of the farewell discourse of Christ to his disciples on the eve of his passion. Immediately before this he had told them that he had come to the Jews and announced to them the word of God, yet notwithstanding the many and great miracles wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine, he had found no faith, but reaped only hatred and persecution. These words were anything but encouraging for the Apostles; they must have thought: As the Jews do not believe Christ, but persecute him, we, his disciples, can scarcely hope to be successful in the preaching of the gospel. Christ explains to them, in the gospel of this day, that another time was coming, and that with the aid of the Holy Ghost, in spite of all persecutions, it would be possible for them to preach his gospel with great success and to gain many souls for heaven.

The gospel of this day may be divided into two prophecies. Christ foretells—

I. That he will send the Holy Ghost to his disciples;
II. That severe persecutions and sufferings will come upon them.

Part II.

1. Christ promises his Apostles the Holy Ghost in these words: *When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.*

(*a.*) Our divine Saviour calls the Holy Ghost, first of all, *the Paraclete*, that is *the Comforter*. The Holy Ghost was a comforter to the Apostles. They were very much afflicted at the loss of their Master. The Holy Ghost consoled them in their bereavement, for he took the place of Christ after his departure; he taught them, imparted his graces to them, and assured them of his assistance for all time to come. He was their consoler in all their tribulations, by keeping up their spirits, by strengthening them, and by infusing heavenly peace into their hearts. Hence we read that they went from the presence of the council, that had imprisoned and scourged them, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.—*Acts*

5: 40, 41. The Holy Ghost is still the Comforter. He consoles repentant sinners, for he cleanses aud sanctifies them and gives them a peace so sweet that nothing in the whole world can compare with it. He consoles the sorrowful, and cause them to persevere in patience, and, in the hope of future happiness, to exclaim with the Apostles: "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."—*Rom.* 8: 18. He consoles the dying, so that, reconciled with God, they cheerfully leave the earth, and say with St. Paul: "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." —*Phil.* 1. 23.

(*b.*) Christ calls the Holy Ghost *the Spirit of Truth.* The Holy Ghost is truly God, and therefore the Spirit of Truth, because God is the eternal infallible truth. But the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth because he taught the Apostles all truth, and, in the preaching of the divine word, protected them from every error. The Holy Ghost still does this to-day in the Catholic Church; he imparts to her the gift of infallibility, so that in matters pertaining to salvation she cannot fall into error, and everything she teaches or prescribes is divine truth. Hence the Apostle calls her the pillar and ground of the truth.—*I. Tim.* 3: 15. Consequently it is our duty to subject ourselves to the Church in matters of religion, and be perfectly obedient to her. "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." —*Matt.* 18: 17.

(*c.*) Our Lord says that he *will send the Holy Ghost from the Father and that he proceeds from the Father.* Here Christ teaches us that the Holy Ghost is a person distinct from him and the Father, and that he will send him from the Father, from whom he proceeds. That the Holy Ghost is not merely an attribute or perfection of God, but a real person, like the Father and the Son, is evident from the fact that Christ represents him as active, and says of him that he is the Comforter, the spirit of truth, who will give testimony. It is also evident that the Holy Ghost is a distinct person from the Father and the Son, because Christ says of him that he proceeds from the Father, and that he will send him from the Father. That the Holy Ghost proceeds, not only from the Father, but also from the Son, we must infer from the fact, that Jesus Christ says that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and is sent by him (the Son); for the Holy Ghost could not be sent by the Son if he did not proceed from him as from the Father. That the Holy Ghost is truly God, like the Father and the Son, is also proved by the statement of Christ that he proceeds from the Father, for no other can proceed from the Father, as true God, than he who has the same essence with

him, therefore is true God. It is likewise proved by Christ calling him the Comforter of men and the Spirit of Truth; for, to console men, that is, to sanctify them, which is principally what is meant by comforting them, and to teach all truth, is a divine work.

The article of the faith that the Holy Ghost is a divine Person and truly God, like the Father and the Son, is very important; for only as God can the Holy Ghost sanctify us, that is, cleanse us from sin, transform us spiritually and renew us, so that we become children of God and heirs of heaven. Let us give the Holy Ghost the same divine homage as to the Father and the Son, let us appreciate the sanctification which he has effected in us in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, and avail ourselves of his graces for the preservation of sanctifying grace, the practice of virtues and good works, and the increase of our merits.

(*d.*) Finally, our Lord says of the Holy Ghost, that *he shall give testimony of him*, that is, the Holy Ghost will give testimony of my Person, of my mission and of my doctrine; he will give testimony that I am the true, only-begotten Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world, that consequently my doctrine is true and divine, and that all who wish to be saved must believe in me. The Holy Ghost gave this testimony on the feast of Pentecost, when he came down in the form of fiery tongues and rested upon the Apostles, imparting to them the gift of tongues and heavenly wisdom, and inspiring them with such courage and zeal that they preached the gospel and converted three thousand Jews in the city of Jerusalem. The Holy Ghost has given testimony at all times, especially by the rapid propagation of the Christian faith, in spite of all obstacles and persecutions from both Jews and Gentiles; by the preservation of it for more than eighteen hundred years, though countless enemies have done their utmost to extirpate it; by countless miracles which he continually worked, and finally by the admirable moral transformation and renovation which he effected among the faithful. Let us give thanks to God for the inestimable grace of being members of the Catholic Church; for the Holy Ghost gives testimony to this Church by ever-returning miracles that she is the only saving Church established by Christ.

2. *And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning.*

(*a.*) The Apostles did give testimony of Christ in word and deed after the reception of the Holy Ghost. They went forth into all the world and preached the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, to the learned and the unlearned, to the high and the low, and courageously proclaimed that there is no salvation in any other than in

Christ crucified, and that all who wish to be saved must believe in him and subject themselves to his holy law. They gave testimony of him by their holy life, by signs and miracles, by patience and constancy in sufferings and persecutions, and finally by martyrdom.

(*b.*) If we desire to be good Christians, we, too, must give testimony of Christ. We must manifest our faith in him, our gratitude and love towards him in word and deed. We must, as often as the honor of God and the salvation of our neighbor require it, confess our Catholic faith, even at the risk of losing our property, our liberty and life, remembering his words: "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven; but he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 10: 32, 33. We should behave reverently in church and adore Jesus profoundly in the Blessed Sacrament, never pronouncing the Holy Name of Jesus except with the greatest veneration, and saluting one another with the beautiful salutation, "Praised be Jesus Christ." But above all, we must lead a good, pious, Christian life, in order to give testimony of Christ by our actions. Parents must bear testimony to him by giving a good example to their children.

PART II.

Christ foretells to his disciples the sufferings and tribulations that will come upon them.

1. *They will put you out of the synagogues, yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God.*

(*a.*) Expulsion from the synagogue meant excommunication or exclusion from the Jewish church. He upon whom this punishment was inflicted was excluded by the judical sentence of the high Council, as an unworthy member, from the society of the people of God, deprived of all civil and spiritual rights and prerogatives of a descendant of Abraham, and delivered over to the public curse. As indicated in the gospel of St. John, this punishment was inflicted also upon Christ.—11: 50-56. According to a tradition in the Talmud, he was ejected from the Jewish Church forty days before his death on the cross, by four hundred trumpets, that is, four hundred priests. The excommunication was also inflicted on the man born blind, because he defended Christ against the accusation of the high Council, and was to be extended to all adherents of Christ, for the leaders of the Jews had

agreed among themselves, that if any man would confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.—*John* 9: 22. There can be no doubt that the Apostles were excommunicated and put out of the synagogue. "We are fools for Christ's sake . . . we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all, even till now."—*I. Cor.* 4: 10-13.

(*b.*) The Apostles should, as Christ foretold them, not only be prepared for being put out of the synagogue, but also for martyrdom and death. When in accordance with the commission of their divine Master they began to preach the gospel, they were scourged and imprisoned; they were charged not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Their lot was uninterrupted persecution, sufferings of every kind, and martyrdom. St. James the Greater was beheaded; St. Peter and his brother St. Andrew died on the cross; St. Paul died by the sword; St. Bartholomew was flayed alive; St. James the Less was cast from the pinnacle of the temple; in a word, none of the Apostles escaped martyrdom; even St. John, who died a natural death, was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil and saved only by a miracle.

2. *And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.* The Jews were so blinded that they thought they were doing a service to God by persecuting the disciples of Christ in every possible way and killing them. But were the Jews without sin because they acted in ignorance? No; for their ignorance was voluntary, an ignorance which could easily have been removed if they had so wished. The Apostles were men who on account of their probity and the blamelessness of their conduct deserved to be credited; they also wrought many miracles in the name of Jesus, and thereby proved incontrovertibly that they taught the truth. When the Jews did not believe, it was not from inculpable ignorance, but from sheer malice; they did not believe, because they would not believe, and therefore they committed the greatest sins when they persecuted and killed the disciples of our Lord. With justice therefore St. Stephen reproaches them: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do you also."—*Acts* 7: 51.

3. At the end of the gospel of this day Christ says: *But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come you may remember that I told you.* Our Lord had only the good of his disciples before his eyes when he foretold their sufferings and persecutions. If he had not foretold them, they would have been in danger of losing courage in the preaching of the gospel,

and of giving up the cause of their divine Master. But now it was otherwise; having in advance been made acquainted with their trials and sufferings they were prepared for them; nay, the very fact that they did come strengthened their faith, for they could say to themselves: It cannot be otherwise; we must be oppressed and persecuted, for Christ foretold it. Moreover, this fulfilment of the prophecy was an argument of the Omniscience, and, consequently, of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and for this reason the strongest foundation for their courage and sacrifice in their apostolic labors.

4. From what Christ foretold his disciples in the gospel of this day, many salutary lessons may be deduced, of which we will consider a few.

(*a.*) He foretells sufferings and persecutions for his disciples. Sufferings and persecutions have ever been the portion of the faithful servants of God. The servant is no better than his master. Since Christ during his earthly life suffered tribulations of every sort, and finally died a most terrible death on the cross, can we complain when we are visited with various afflictions? Oh, let us never impatiently complain of crosses and sufferings, but rather account ourselves happy when we can suffer something with Christ, hoping to be glorified with him. Let us consider that it is only the way of the cross that leads to heaven.

(*b.*) What were the Apostles to endure? They were branded as impious, execrable men, put out of the synagogues, imprisoned, scourged, abused, persecuted and put to death. What must we suffer in the service of God? Perhaps a little derision, a few hard words, rudeness, detraction. What is that compared with what the Apostles were obliged to endure? And should we not accept such little things and endure then patiently? Ah! what kind of Christians should we be, if we wished always to lie on a bed of roses?

(*c.*) We see in our days that the Church is sorely pressed and persecuted. Let us not become pusillanimous. These sufferings and persecutions of the Church are clear testimonies in favor of her divine origin. If it should once come to pass that the Church were to be praised, loved, honored, and overwhelmed with benefits, as is the case with the sects, she would no longer be the bride of Christ, but the harlot of the devil. Let us cling the firmer to the Church the more she is oppressed and persecuted, consoling ourselves with the promise and assurance of Christ that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.

(*d.*) Why were the Jews so hostile to the Apostles and hated and persecuted them even to death? Jesus Christ answers this question, in these words: *These things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor me.* Oh, how many and great sins and disorders originate from ignorance in matters of religion! Whence come so many frauds and iniquities in business transactions, so many sins against the sixth commandment, so many slanders, detractions, defamations, and whisperings, such neglect of religion and other duties of life? Frequently from this that people are not sufficiently instructed, *and do not care to be instructed in the doctrines and precepts of religion,* because they do not know, and do not care to know, their duties as Christians, and the duties appertaining to their state of life; because they do not hear the word of God, never read a spiritual book; on the contrary, they read papers and books hostile to the Church and associate with men who make it their business to prepare the way for infidelity. But such ignorance, like that of the Jews, is very sinful, since it is voluntary and has its foundation in a perverse, wicked disposition.

PERORATION.

Take care that you do not deliver yourselves to such pernicious ignorance and blindness. Let no passion reign in your heart, for it is the passions that mostly blind men, so that they hold the greatest sins and vices to be right and lawful and even stamp them as virtues. Diligently listen to sermons, in which the truths and precepts of the Christian religion are explained, and love to read spiritual books in order to acquire the necessary knowledge of Christian doctrine and to be preserved from error. Live piously, for this is the best protection against all delusion, and, at the same time, the way by which you can attain true knowledge of God and life everlasting. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

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3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

WHAT DOES FAITH TEACH US CONCERNING THE HOLY GHOST?

When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.—John 15: 26.

In the gospel of this day we find our Blessed Lord in a room at Jerusalem, in the midst of his disciples. It is the Eve of his passion; the time of leaving the earth is at hand. The Apostles, who cling to him with all the affection of their hearts, are in deep sorrow; for he told them that he would leave them and go to his Father. He consoles them by repeating the promise that the Holy Ghost shall come down upon them and abide with them for ever. As on next Sunday we celebrate the aniversary of Pentecost, that memorable festival on which, according to the promise of Christ, the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, I will, to prepare you for this glorious feast, avail myself of the occasion to recall to your mind that our holy Faith teaches us that—

I. The Holy Ghost is a distinct Person;
II. A divine Person;
III. Proceeding from the Father and the Son.

PART I.

1. *The Holy Ghost is a distinct Person.*

The Socinians and other heretics deny the Holy Ghost to be a distinct Person, asserting that by the expression *Holy Ghost* only certain effects produced by God are signified. As regards the following texts of Holy Scripture: "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world" (*Wisd.* 1: 7); "The spirit of God dwelleth in you" (*I. Cor.* 3: 16); "The Spirit of Truth will teach you all truth" (*John* 16: 13), they say that these and similar passages do not signify that the Holy Ghost is a distinct Person from the Father and the Son, but that they are only certain effects giving expression to the manner in which God enlightens man, teaches them truth and dwells in their hearts. This, however, is a perni-

cious error; the Holy Ghost is a distinct Person, like the Father and the Son, and possesses everything that constitutes personality, understanding, free will, and self-action. This Catholic doctrine is in accordance with—

(*a.*) *The Holy Scripture*, which attributes personal acts to the Holy Ghost, saying that he will teach all truth, be a comforter and give testimony of Christ (*John* 14: 15); that he will show things to come (*John* 16: 13); that he will convince the world of sin of justice, and of judgment (*John* 16: 8); that he asks for us with unspeakable groanings (*Rom.* 8: 26); and that he imparts divers graces (*I. Cor.* 12: 2-11). How could these and other personal acts be attributed to and be performed by the Holy Ghost, unless he be a distinct Person?

Moreover, the Holy Ghost is frequently spoken of in the Sacred Scripture as a Person distinct from the Father and the Son. Thus Christ says: "I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth."—*John* 14: 16. Here Christ says expressly that the Holy Ghost is neither himself nor the Father. Again, he says in the gospel of this day: *When the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceeaeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.*—*John* 15: 26. It is evident from these words that the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father, from whom he proceeds, and from the Son, of whom he will give testimony and by whom he is sent. In the form of baptism, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the same honor is ascribed to the Holy Ghost as to the Father and the Son. When Christ was baptized the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove, distinct from the Father, whose voice was heard from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son" (*Luke* 3: 22), and from the Son, who was baptized.

(*b.*) *The Fathers of the Church.* Clement of Rome, in the first century, calls the Holy Ghost the dispenser of graces and the inspirer of the Prophets, and says: "Have we not one God, one Christ and one Spirit of grace, who is infused into us." Evidently in these words he speaks of the Holy Ghost as a Person really distinct from the Father and the Son. Origen says: "There are three Persons, the unbegotten Father, the only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost. For the Son is other than the Father, and the Holy Ghost other than the Father and the Son."

PART II.

The Holy Ghost is a divine Person, true God with the Father and the Son. This truth is taught—

1. *By the Sacred Scripture.*

(*a.*) It calls him *God* in express terms. Peter said to Ananias: "Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied to men, but to God."—*Acts* 5: 3, 4. If Ananias, by the lie which he told to the Holy Ghost, has lied not to men but to God, it is evident that the Holy Ghost is God.

(*b.*) It attributes *divine perfections* to the Holy Ghost. *Omnipresence:* "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world."—*Wisd.* 1: 7. *Omniscience:* "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God."—*I. Cor.* 2: 10, 11. *Omnipotence:* for the Apostle, after enumerating the divers effects of the Holy Ghost, concludes with these words: "But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will."—*I. Cor.* 12: 11. *Veracity:* "But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth."—*John* 16: 13. If the Holy Ghost has divine perfections, he must necessarily be God; no creature, neither angel nor man, has divine perfections.

(*c.*) The Holy Scripture attributes *divine works* to the Holy Ghost. *The Creation.* "By the word of the Lord, the heavens were established: and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth,"—*Ps.* 32: 6. "Thou shalt send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created; and thou shalt renew the face of the earth."—*Ps.* 103: 30. *The Inspiration of the Prophets:* "And it shall come to pass after this, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."—*Joel* 2: 28. *The Incarnation of the Son of God,* born of Mary the Virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the most high shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—*Luke* 1: 35. *The Spiritual regeneration and sanctifcation of man:* "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* 3: 5. "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the spirit of our God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 11. Lastly, *the government of the Church and of the Apostles:* "I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16. "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the church of God."—*Acts* 20: 28.

(*d.*) It claims *divine worship* for him. When Jesus commanded them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he evidently required for the Holy Ghost the same divine worship as for the Father and the Son.

2. *By tradition.*

(*a.*) *The Fathers:* Clement of Alexandria says: "One is the Father of all things, and one is the Word (the Son) of all things, and one is the Holy Ghost, who also is everywhere." St. Epiphanius: "The Holy Ghost is also to be adored, for he is God." St. Augustine: "The Holy Ghost is God, as the Son of God is God and the Father is God."

(*b.*) *The Councils:* As early as in the General Council of Constantinople, 381) the Church unanimously condemned the heresy of Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and she expressly declared: "That the Holy Ghost, the Lord and life-giver, is adored and glorified together with the Father and the Son." The Council of Lateran (1215) also teaches the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, saying: "The Father is from no one, the Son from the Father alone, and the Holy Ghost from both, without beginning; the Father begets always and without end; the Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeds." The Council of Florence (1439) teaches the same doctrine. Thus the Catholic Church teaches and has always taught.

PART II.

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one source. This truth of our holy faith was denied by the Greek schismatics in the ninth century, who then asserted, and still assert, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only. The doctrine of the Catholic Church is clearly contained—

1. *In Holy Scripture.*

(*a.*) Christ says: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth . . . He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine. Therefore I said, that he shall receive of mine, and shew it to you."—*John* 16: 13-15. He asserts in these words that the Holy Ghost receives his nature also from him, giving as the reason that "all things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine," that is, the divine nature of the Father is mine also.

(*b.*) Christ further said, that he would send the Holy Ghost: *When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father... he shall give testimony of me.*—*John* 15: 26. Although by the expression, "sending a person," we understand his exterior operation in creatures, it presupposes the procession of that person from him by whom he is sent. The three persons being equal to each other in power, wisdom, goodness and in all perfections, this sending is not as among men by counsel or command, but by communicating the essence of the person sending to the person sent, or, in other words, the person sent proceeds from the person that sends.

(*c.*) The Holy Ghost is frequently called in Holy Scripture the Spirit *of the Son.* "Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father."—*Gal.* 4: 6. No other reason for this appellation can be assigned than that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son also. St. Augustine says: "Why should we not believe that the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son, since he is called the Spirit of the Son?"

2. *In tradition.*

(*a.*) *The holy Fathers.* St. Hilary says: "Of the Holy Ghost we must confess that he is through the Father and the Son; that he proceeds from the Father and the Son." St. Ambrose: "The Holy Spirit is truly a Spirit, he proceeds from the Father and the Son." St. Epiphanius: "The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, is the third light from the Father and the Son."

(*b.*) *The Councils and Confessions of Faith.* The second Council of Lyons (1274) declares: "We piously and believingly confess that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son." The Holy Catholic and Roman Church, the mother and teacher of all Christians, has always taught this. This is the unchangeable and true declaration of the orthodox Fathers and teachers of the Latin, as well as of the Greek, Church. In this same sense the Council of Florence (1439) expressed itself. In the Nicene Creed we say: I believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son;" in the Athanasian: "The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."

3. The Holy Ghost proceeds, however, from the Father and the Son, as *from one source.* St. Augustine explains this doctrine in the following manner: "As the Father and the Son are no more than one God, and, as regards the creation, are but one Creator and one Lord, so they are but one source to the Holy

Ghost; with regard to the creation, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one source, as they are one Creator and one Lord." The General Councils of Lyons (1274) and of Florence (1439) defined this doctrine as a dogma.

PERORATION.

The Holy Ghost, then, is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, not an effect of God, but a distinct Person; the Holy Ghost is not a creature, any more than the Father and the Son, but equal to the Father and the Son, true God as they are; the Holy Ghost proceeds, not from the Father only, but from the Father, and the Son, as from one source. Such being the dignity of the Holy Ghost, we have every reason to make a due preparation for his coming. Let us then in the wedding garment of sanctifying grace meet our Consoler and Intercessor, our Light and Teacher, the sweet Guardian of our souls. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

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4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.—*John* 15: 26.

Three days ago we celebrated the feast of the Ascension of Christ, and now we stand on the threshold of the last cycle of the feasts of the Ecclesiastical Year, which, having Pentecost for its principal feast, is called the Pentecost cycle. In this cycle we perceive the operation of the Holy Ghost, who applies to us the merits of our Redeemer, and effects our sanctification in the Church. Historically the Pentecost cycle began with the first Christian feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles; and it will last to the end of the world, for which reason the Church annually reads on the last Sunday after Pentecost the gospel describing the end of the world and the last judgment. The ten days from the Ascension to Pentecost form the transition to the Pentecost cycle; and, like

the Apostles, we must employ them in preparation for the holy feast of Pentecost, that we too may become sharers of the graces of the Holy Ghost. The Church teaches us how to make this preparation—

I. In the mass of this Sunday;
II. In the celebration of the Vigil of Pentecost.

PART I.

In the mass of this Sunday three things are specially mentioned by means of which we must prepare ourselves for the feast of Pentecost; *desire, prayer, and the love of our neighbor.*

1. *Desire.* We are reminded of it—

(*a.*) In the *Introit*, which reads: "Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee, Alleluia. My heart hath said to thee: I have sought thy face: thy face, O Lord, I will seek, turn not away thy face from me, Alleluia, Alleluia. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"—*Ps.* 26: 7-9. With these words of the introit the Church indicates the days between the Ascension of Christ and Pentecost as a time of desire for the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles were filled with such a desire. When Christ, at his departure, promised them another Comforter, the Holy Ghost, they had a great longing for him, and with desire they looked forward to the day when he would come down upon them. We should, like the Apostles, have a great desire for the Holy Ghost, longing that he may come and impart to us his graces. He who has not this desire gives us to understand that he belongs to the world, which, as Christ expressly declares, cannot receive the Holy Ghost.—*John* 14: 17. Let us then in these days often implore God to send us his Spirit to renew the face of the earth.—*Ps.* 103: 30.

(*b.*) *In the Gospel*, which speaks of the necessity of the coming of the Holy Ghost. In this gospel, Christ promises his disciples the Holy Ghost as the Comforter and teacher of truth, and foretells the sufferings and persecutions in store for them. The Apostles were to preach the gospel; they needed the Spirit of Truth to guard them against error: they were to endure great tribulations in their missionary work; they needed a comforter to sustain them amidst their tribulations and furnish them with strength to overcome all obstacles. They looked forward therefore to the coming of the Holy Ghost with the greatest desire, well knowing that they would need his assistance.

We, too, need the Holy Ghost, this Comforter and Spirit of Truth, to enable us to work out our salvation. He must enlighten us, that we may not deviate from the path of truth and virtue; he must raise our drooping spirits and comfort us, that in the many obstacles and difficulties in the way of salvation we may not be discouraged; he must impart to us strength to persevere to the end in the service of God. How much reason, then, have we to desire the Holy Ghost and to sigh for his coming!

2. *Prayer.* In the Collect, Secret, and Post Communion, the Church invites us to petition God for grace to dedicate ourselves to his service, to obtain strength for the practice of virtue and to persevere to the end, in gratitude for his gifts. The Apostles prepared themselves for the feast of Pentecost by prayer. The Acts record that, after the Ascension of our Lord, they returned to Jerusalem and went up into an upper room, where they persevered, with one mind, in prayer.—*Acts* 1: 13, 14. Again, St. Luke says that they were continually, in the temple, praising and blessing God. Though Christ had repeatedly promised them the Holy Ghost, they nevertheless deemed prayer necessary, remembering the words of the Lord: "If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him."—*Luke* 11: 13.

Let us also practise prayer in these days before Pentecost. With renewed devotion say your morning and evening prayers; recollect yourselves frequently during the day and say some ejaculatory prayers. If your circumstances permit, hear mass on week days and visit Jesus in the tabernacle. Perform daily some short devotion in honor of the Holy Ghost such as reciting the hymn, "Come Holy Ghost," etc.

3. *The love of our neighbor.* We are exhorted in the epistle to exhibit this love. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of charity; he descends and gives his grace only where he finds charity. The Apostles were well aware of this; they sincerely loved one another, and "had but one heart and one soul."—*Acts* 4: 32. Imitate them and follow the advice of St. Peter: "Have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves." Live in peace with your neighbors and avoid all discord and disunion. And since, as the Apostle says, *charity covereth a multitude of sins*, practise this patient, indulgent charity towards those who have faults, or from whom you have something to endure, and remember that you are Christians, who, according to the strict command of Christ, are bound to love their enemies and magnanimously forgive all injuries and offenses.—*Matt.* 5: 44; 6: 15. "Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring, as every one hath received

grace."—*I. Pet.* 4: 9. Practise as much as you can the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, for as St. Augustine says: "Mercy stands at the gate of hell and allows no one to be cast into prison who here on earth has exercised mercy. He who has been merciful here shall find mercy hereafter."

PART II.

The Saturday before Pentecost is a Vigil, that is, one of those days on which the early Christians spent the whole night, or at least the greater part of it, in the church or at home in exercises of devotion, observing a strict fast. Let us briefly consider this Vigil as observed in our days.

1. The Vigil of Pentecost is a fast-day, and the first fast-day in the holy-time of Easter, for although the feast of the Ascension has a Vigil it is not a fast-day. Why not? The Scribes and Pharisees once reproached Christ because his disciples did not fast. He replied to them: "Can you make the children of the bridegroom fast, whilst the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; then shall they fast in those days."—*Luke* 5: 33-35. Up to Ascension day Christ, the bridegroom, was with them; for this reason the Church instituted no fast-day from Easter to the Ascension; but after that feast she did so because Christ was no longer with them. Besides, fasting is an exercise of penance, and the fast-day before Pentecost reminds us of the necessity of cleansing our heart by penance from the stains of sin, for "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."—*Wisd.* 1: 4. It is, therefore, highly desirable that in order to cleanse your conscience from all sins, you should go to confession and communion at this time and endeavor to avert your temporal punishment by mortification and good works.

2. The celebration of the Vigil of Pentecost begins *with six prophecies* which the priest reads at the Altar. All these prophecies refer to the feast of Pentecost, for they point to the graces which are imparted to the redeemed human race and contain the conditions which we must comply with for the obtaining of these graces. The prayers which follow the prophecies refer to the imparting of the Holy Ghost to the hearts of men and the effects thereby produced. Thus the prophecies and prayers remind us of the graces of the Holy Ghost and are an admonition to us, by a renovation of our heart, mind and life, to prepare ourselves for the feast of Pentecost.

3. The prophecies are followed by the blessing of *baptismal water*, which is done because in the earliest times of the Church, at Pentecost, as well as at Easter, solemn baptism was administered. Moreover, the effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost is, as it were, a second baptism, the Holy Ghost strengthening in us and bringing to perfection the life of grace, to which he has raised us in the Sacrament of Baptism; wherefore Christ says, "You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."—*Acts* 1: 5. The blessing of the baptismal water on the Vigil of Pentecost is an opportune exhortation to us to renew our baptismal vows.

4. After the blessing of the baptismal water, the *Litany of the Saints* is chanted, during which the priest prostrates himself before the altar and remains in that posture until the until the latter part of the Litany, *Peccatores*, etc. By this is expressed that we must humble ourselves, if we wish to receive the graces of the Holy Ghost, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—*James* 4: 6. The Holy Ghost did not descend upon the proud Scribes and Pharisees, but upon the humble disciples of Christ on Whit-Sunday.

5. The mass which follows thy Litany of the Saints is celebrated in red vestments, because it is offered up in honor of the Holy Ghost, who manifested himself on the feast of Pentecost in the form of fiery tongues. The red color reminds us of the fire of love, which the Holy Ghost communicates to us, according to the words of the Apostle: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."—*Rom.* 5: 5. At the *Gloria* all the bells are rung. This solemn ringing of the bells announces the joyful tidings of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and reminds us of the propagation of the holy faith through the Apostles, to whom the Church applies the words of the Psalmist: "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."—*Ps.* 18: 5.

The collect of the mass refers to the Holy Ghost. In the epistle we read that St. Paul came to Ephesus and imposed his hands upon some of the disciples of St. John, after having instructed them in the Christian faith and baptized them; the Holy Ghost then came down upon them. In the gospel Christ promises his disciples the Holy Ghost in these words: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth."—*John* 14: 15, *et seq.* All the prayers of the mass contain petitions to the Holy Ghost that he may come down upon us, enlighten, cleanse and strengthen us.

PERORATION.

Thus the Church, in the mass of to-day, and in the celebration of the Vigil, gives us a beautiful instruction as to how we are to prepare ourselves for the feast of Pentecost, so that the Holy Ghost may impart to us his graces. Excite in yourselves an ardent desire for the Holy Ghost and his graces, and fervently pray that he may come down upon you and replenish you with his gifts. Cleanse your heart from all inordinate inclinations and sins by sincere repentance; practise various pious exercises; deprive yourselves of some food and drink; impose upon yourselves some voluntary mortifications, and perform some corporal and spiritual works of mercy. If in such a way you prepare yourselves for the feast of Pentecost, it will become to you a great source of graces; you will be "signed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance."—*Ephes.* 1: 13, 14. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

HOW WE MUST GIVE TESTIMONY OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLES.

And you shall give testimony because you are with me from the beginning.—*John* 15: 27.

Our Lord tells us in the gospel of this day that his Apostles shall give testimony of him. They did so. After the descent of the Holy Ghost they preached the gospel to the high and the low, to the learned and the unlearned, to the Jews and Gentiles, in cities and in the country, and gave solemn testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, and that all who wish to be saved must believe in him. They could give this testimony because they were with him from the beginning. They were for the space of three years in the most intimate relation with him, were unceasingly instructed in the truths and doctrines of salvation, and saw with their own eyes the miracles which he wrought throughout Galilee and Judea. Moreover,

he sent them the Holy Ghost, who brought to their minds all things whatsoever he had said to them, and enlightened and assisted them, that they might not err in the preaching of the gospel. I will speak to you to-day of this testimony of the Apostles and explain how we too must give testimony of Christ according to their example—

I. By the raising of three fingers;
II. By seal and signature.

PART I.

In Catholic countries when any one gives testimony before a court he affirms it on oath, raising the first three fingers of the right hand; by this sign he calls upon God, the Triune, to witness that he will speak the truth. Now the Apostles also gave testimony of Christ by the lifting up of three fingers.

1. *By the finger of doctrine.* They began their office of teaching on the feast of Pentecost when they had received the Holy Ghost. They preached at Jerusalem, the home of the high priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, those most bitter enemies and murderers of Christ, with the greatest fearlessness, and affirmed that there is no salvation in any other than in Jesus Christ crucified. Three thousand Jews were converted and baptized, and shortly after five thousand more. The high Council rose up against them, cast them into prison, scourged them and forbade them most strictly to preach any longer in the name of Jesus. What did the Apostles do? Were they so intimated by this ill-treatment and prohibition as to cease to give testimony of Christ? Oh, no; on the contrary, they fearlessly said; "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."—*Acts* 4: 19, 20. Faithful to their calling, they went into all parts of the world and preached not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. Everywhere Christian congregations were established, and millions of believers now bend the knee before Jesus Christ. Thus the Apostles gave testimony of Jesus by the finger of doctrine.

Thus we also must give testimony of him. Parents in particular have this obligation; they must be apostles to their children and by means of instruction lead them to the practice of virtue. St. Augustine says: "As we bishops and pastors of souls must speak to you in our churches, so you parents are bound to speak in your houses, that you may be able to give an account of your children who are entrusted to your care." You all must give testimony of Christ by speaking always and everywhere the language of a true, loyal Catholic, and by manifesting on every oc-

casion zeal for the holy faith. If you happen to meet men who have erroneous principles, instruct them to the best of your ability; if in your presence anything is said against the Church, her doctrines, institutions and ordinances, far from complacently listening to it or timidly keeping silence, you must defend the truth without passion, with earnestness and calmness, and tell them without fear that the Catholic Church and all that she teaches and ordains is sacred to you, and that you account it the greatest privilege to belong to her.

2. *By the finger of the contempt of the world.* The Apostles manifested at the very outset, when Christ called them as his Apostles, an admirable contempt of all earthly things, for they left all that the worldling loves so much and to which his heart clings; they left their friends and relatives, their home and business, the conveniences of life, and followed him; wherefore St. Peter says: "Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee; what, therefore, shall we have?"—*Matt.* 19: 27. St. Paul says of himself: "I count all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung that I may gain Christ." —*Phil.* 3: 8. All things whatsoever that the majority of men esteem and love, such as honors and dignities, joys and pleasures, money and property, the Apostles counted as nothing for the sake of Christ; all these things had no more value in their eyes than dung. By this contempt of the world the Apostles again give a glorious testimony of Christ, for men who trample as it were, under feet, everything that flatters sensuality, and take upon themselves that which is opposed to it, such as poverty, lowliness, contempt, could not fail to gain the admiration of all; and every observing man must come to the conclusion that they who make such great sacrifices for Christ and his gospel are not impostors, but witnesses of the truth, and worthy of credit.

Even to our day Catholic missionaries give the most effectual testimony of Christ. When the pagan nations see these missionaries living in the greatest poverty, renouncing all the conveniences and enjoyments of the world, deterred by no difficulty and danger, they are amazed; they soon give them their confidence and love and are converted to the Christian faith. How different it is with the Protestant missionaries! They are well clad and well fed; they are provided with every comfort of life, to say nothing of a wife and children, and so the poor pagans seeing all this do not esteem them, and the results are highly unsatisfactory.

We too must give testimony of Christ by the finger of the contempt of the world. He who sets his heart on earthly goods and labors immoderately for their acquisition, cannot be his true dis-

ciple. "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him."—*I. John* 2: 15. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God."—*James* 4: 4. We are allowed to possess temporal goods and to better our condition, neither do we sin by sometimes enjoying innocent pleasures and amusements, but this must be done only in so far as our salvation suffers no loss. Let us reflect that everything in the world is in the end only vanity; it cannot satisfy our heart; it is perishable and we must abandon it altogether at our death. Let us learn in this world to be above the world.

3. *By the finger of a holy life.* Though the Apostles had some faults in the beginning, they always meant well, had a good will, and were men of an amiable character, but when they had received the Holy Ghost they appeared as models of sanctity. How admirable was their humility, meekness, patience, their love of God and of their neighbor! Consider the first Christians; they lived so holily that they were called saints, and they deserved that name. Justin, the martyr, describes their conduct in the following words: "They live in their own country, but as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and their own fatherland a foreign country. They live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh; they live upon earth, but their heart is in heaven. They obey the laws of the land, but their conduct surpasses all laws. They love all, and are persecuted by all. They are poor, and make many rich. Their name is calumniated, and by calumnies their innocence is proved." When St. Blandina was tortured on account of crimes which were falsely laid to her charge, she exclaimed: "I am a Christian. Nothing wrong is done among us." Now, whence this sanctity of the first Christains? From the Apostles, who, not only by their word, but also by their example, instructed them in all virtues. It was by this sanctity of life that the Apostles gave the most effectual testimony of Christ. All well-disposed Jews and Gentiles who saw that the Apostles led a truly heavenly life and excelled in all virtues, especially in the love of their neighbor, came to the conviction that these holy men taught nothing but the truth; therefore, they believed in Christ, and embraced the Christian religion. Alexander the Great heard that one of his soldiers had the same name as himself, but in his conduct was by no means an Alexander. He said to him therefore in an earnest tone: "Give up your name, or act in a manner worthy of an Alexander. Thus, if we wish to be true Christians, we follow Christ and lead a Christian life. Very appropriately Salvianus says: "In vain do we glory in the prerogative and name of Christian, if we act and live in such a manner that the name we bear is a disgrace to Christ." Christ was all meekness, humility and love! what kind of a Christian are you, if you nour-

ish in your heart anger, enmity, pride, vanity, envy? Christ prayed and watched whole nights in prayer, what kind of a Christian are you who will not hear of prayer? When unbelievers and heretics see that we indulge shameful passions and lead a worldly, sinful life, what opinion must they have of our faith? Do we not give them scandal instead of edifying them by a holy life and leading them to Christ and his Church? Take to heart the words of St. Augustine: "He is not a Christian, not a servant of Christ, but rather a mocker of Christ, who calls himself his servant, and yet does not serve him.

PART II.

If any one give a written testimony, in order to be legal and of any account it must have a seal and a signature. The best testimony without seal and signature is worthless, and is rejected everywhere as so much waste paper. But if any one brings a testimony sealed and signed it is everywhere accepted with its full contents, judged and acted upon accordingly, provided there exist no doubt as to the genuineness of the seal and signature. Such a testimony, provided with seal and signature, the Apostles have given of Christ, they have given testimony of the truth and divinity of his doctrine.

1. *By the impression of the seal of miracles.* If the Apostles had not sealed their preaching by miracles, would they have been believed? Certainly not, they would have been rejected as imposters, and this the more so, since Christ, their Master, had died a most ignominious death on the cross, and his doctrine contained so many things repugnant to the sensual nature of man. But when the Apostles confirmed the gospel with miracles, every one was obliged to look upon them as messengers of God and teachers of truth; no man can work miracles of his own power, but only through the omnipotence of God; if any one, therefore, works miracles in confirmation of his words, God himself gives testimony to him that he speaks the truth and deserves unconditional belief. The Sacred Scriptures, especially the Acts of the Apostles, testify that the Apostles wrought miracles. St. Peter healed a lame man, who sat at the door of the temple, begging.—*Acts* 3: 1, *et seq.* Even his shadow had a miraculous effect, for all the sick upon whom it fell were healed.—*Acts.* 5: 15. Of St. Paul we read that he healed a lame man at Lystra (*Acts* 14: 7, *et seq*); that he delivered a girl from the devil (16: 16, *et seq*); that at Troas he raised up Eutychus to life, and that sickness departed from those upon whom his handkerchiefs and cinctures were laid, and that the evil spirits went out of those who were

possessed. The other Apostles wrought similar miracles among the Jews and Gentiles.

Can we also seal our testimony of Christ by miracles? Yes, for although it is not in our power to work miracles in the proper sense of the word, miracles of another kind are possible with us. We work such miracles—

(*a.*) *By preserving virtue and innocence among the wicked.* The Apostle exhorts us to this, in these words: "Be blameless and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."—*Phil.* 2: 15. Such lights were Noe in the midst of the depraved human race which was drowned by the deluge; Abraham among the idolatrous Chaldeans; Lot in sinful Sodom; Job among the pagans; Tobias in Babylon. It requires more than ordinary strength of character to remain virtuous and innocent among the wicked; nay, we may almost call it a miracle for a Christian to serve God with such fidelity as to frustrate all the efforts made by the wicked to seduce him; such examples are at least almost as rare as miracles. From this follows a double lesson for you. Avoid as much as possible the proximate occasions of sin, familiarities with persons of the opposite sex, conversation with unbelieving and perverse people, visits to houses and places where little regard is had to discipline and the fear of God, amusements dangerous to morals. To go into such occasions of sin, or to remain in them, and expect not to sin, is to tempt God. "Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?"—*Prov.* 6: 27. Let him who wishes to guard against sin and perdition, avoid the proximate occasion of sin. If he is in such a position that he cannot do this, let him make the proximate occasion a remote one by meditation, prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, and especially by the employment of the means prescribed to him by his father confessor.

(*b.*) *By patiently enduring all injuries and offenses.* He who patiently endures contumelies, ignominies, abuses and offenses of all kinds, must do violence to himself, for these things are painful to human nature, which resents injuries inflicted, and desires revenge. Now when a Christian puts the commandments of God in the place of nature and courageously overcomes himself, it is really no less than to work miracles. When a venerable old man came one day to the city of Alexandria from the desert to visit a sick friend, the rabble of the town gathered about him, loading him with all possible insults. Among many other things, they asked him if he could perform miracles. A man who was passing, said: "This pious old man need not work a miracle. It is a miracle that he bears your insults and offenses so patiently."

In the primitive ages of Christianity many heathens were converted by the meekness of Christians. You would think it a great thing if you possessed the power of working miracles. Study Christian meekness and bear all insults, contumelies and offenses patiently, and you will gain more merit than if by miracles you were to heal the sick and raise the dead to life.

2. *By affixing their signature.* The Apostles signed and sealed their testimony of Christ with their blood; they died as martyrs. This undoubtedly was one of the strongest proofs that they could give of the truth and divinity of Christianity. For how can it be thought that for the sake of the name of Jesus they could have gone to death so courageously, with such constancy and cheerfulness, if they had not had the fullest conviction that the gospel which they preached was the word of God?

We must give testimony of Christ as martyrs in a spiritual sense; we must mortify—

(*a.*) *Our own will,* by submitting cheerfully to the will of others, in so far as it is possible without sin. He who seeks his own will in everything, betrays pride, disturbs the peace and is the fruitful source of many disorders. Dependants, such as married women, children and servants should mind this, and render obedience cheerfully in all right and lawful things.

(*b.*) *Our inordinate inclinations,* with which, more or less, all men, even pious Christians, are afflicted. Examine what are your predominant passions, whether they are pride, covetousness, impurity, envy, and do violence to yourselves daily, in order to keep under and subdue these inclinations and by degrees to eradicate them. Without such mortifications we can never become truly virtuous, much less perfect.

(*c.*) *Our outward senses.* These are the doors through which, if they are not closed and guarded, the enemies of our salvation enter and destroy the life of grace. How much mischief is caused by the eyes if they are not guarded! The same may be said of the ears and the tongue. Examples from the Bible and history. For this reason the saints were intent upon mortifying their senses. This triple mortification is indeed difficult and painful, a continual martyrdom, but on that account it is as meritorious as martyrdom itself.

PERORATION.

Make the resolution to-day, like the Apostles, to give testimony of Christ; give testimony of him by raising up three fingers.

Esteem and love your holy faith above all things, and profess it in word and deed, as often as the honor of God and your own salvation require it. *Do not love the world nor the things in the world;* for all that it has and offers is vain and perishable; your heart belongs to God alone; he deserves to be loved above all and in all. Live piously: "so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16. Give testimony of Christ with seal and signature; serve God with zeal and fidelity in the midst of the scandals and seductions of the world and lead a mortified, hidden life in Christ, that he may recognize you as his disciples, and admit you to the mansions of bliss. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

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6. MORAL SKETCH.

LIES.—THE VICE OF LYING.

When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.—John 15: 26.

The Apostles were not the only ones to receive the Holy Ghost, whom Christ promises in the gospel of this day; all of us receive him. He descended upon the Apostles on Whit-Sunday visibly, in the form of fiery tongues; we have received him invisibly, first in Baptism and then in Confirmation. The Holy Ghost was indeed the Spirit of Truth to the Apostles, for he enlightened and strengthened them, so that they always gave testimony to truth and taught nothing but truth. The Holy Ghost must also be a Spirit of Truth to us; we must love truth and always hold firmly to it, and hate and shun nothing so much as untruth and lies. An untruth or a lie should never proceed from the mouth of a Christian, whose heart is a temple of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth. And yet lying is a widely spread vice among Christians. Parents and children tell lies, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, all tell lies; and without fear of contradiction, I may say that there is hardly one among us who would not lie if he said that he had never lied. The reason is because people make no account of lying, and look upon it

either as no fault, or as very excusable one. To teach you better, I will speak to-day about lying and show you—

I. Its heinousness;
II. Its perniciousness.

PART I.

The heinousness of lying must be evident to us when we consider—

1. *That the man who tells lies resembles the devil.* This spirit of untruth deceived our first parents, persuading them to eat of the forbidden fruit, so that they might not die, but be as gods. He has played this lying game at all times and will never desist from it to the end of time, for he is "a liar, and the father thereof."—*John* 8: 44. He, therefore, who tells lies is a confederate of Satan, and the reproof applies to him which Christ made to the Scribes and Pharisees: "You are of your father, the devil."—*John* 8: 44. But is it not contemptible to take the devil, the most abject of creatures, for a pattern, and to render one's self like him?

2. *That it is diametrically opposed to the divine law.* We find in the Sacred Scriptures a multitude of passages in which lying is branded as the most abominable vice. Thus we read: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."—*Prov.* 12: 22. And again: "A lie is a foul blot in a man; and yet it will be continually in the mouth of men without discipline. A thief is better than a man that is always lying; but both of them shall inherit destruction. The manners of a lying men are without honor, and their confusion is with them without ceasing."—*Ecclus.* 20: 26-28. Our Lord himself calls liars children of Satan, and commands us to speak the truth, when he says: "Let your speech be, yea, yea, no, no: and that which is over and above these is of evil."—*Matt.* 5: 37.

3. *That it is forbidden by the holy Fathers as a heinous vice.* St Augustine wrote a whole book on lying, and, among many other things says that it is not lawful to tell a lie, even though we could thereby obtain the salvation of a man—nay, the salvation of the whole world. St. Ambrose says: "Beware, bretheren, of a lie, for all who love lies are children of the devil, not by nature indeed, but by imitation." St. Justin says: "We will rather not live than tell a lie." How truly this saint spoke, millions of Christians proved during the persecution which lasted three hundred years. They might have saved their estates, their

liberty, their lives, by an apparently insignificant lie; when asked by the pagan judges whether they were Christians, all they had to say was: We are not—and no harm would have befallen them. Who would not think that under these circumstances they would have allowed themselves to tell a lie? But no, they did not; undaunted and intrepid they delivered themselves to the most cruel tortures and to the most painful death; but an untruth they would not tell.

4. *That it brings upon him who tells a lie, even among men, shame and disgrace.* To be a liar means as much as to be without confidence, without probity and fidelity. What is more disgraceful than to be looked upon as such? St. Ephrem says: "He who rejoices in lying forfeits all credibility: he is odious to God and man." Nothing wounds the soul more, and is a greater disgrace to it, than a lie. Even he who lies and has acquired a habit of lying, is ashamed of this vice, and can not endure the imputation of being a liar, for he feels how disgraceful it is to be notorious as such.

5. *That even by heathens it is held to be a disgraceful vice.* Aristotle says: "Lying is a vice of slaves and mean persons." When the Greeks caught any one telling a lie they branded him and declared him incapable of ever holding a public office. Among the Persians two things were held to be the greatest crimes, the refusal to pay debts, and lies. The Emperor Trajan had dethroned the Thracian king, and given the kingdom to his son, but having heard that he had told a lie, with great indignation he took the kingdom from him, saying: "Being a liar you are not worthy of a throne, and it is not becoming to Rome, the mother of truth, to have a lying son."

6. *That it is a disgrace to man and a dishonor to God.* The highest dignity of man is and consists in his being in the likeness of God. He violates this dignity when he speaks an untruth, for God is eternal truth and hates a lie. He gave man a tongue to give testimony to truth. For as a watchmaker puts the hands on the watch that it may tell the time with fidelity and punctuality, so according to God's purpose the tongue is, as it were, to be a hand which outwardly manifests with accuracy what is conceived within the heart. When the mouth tells a lie, the tongue has, so to speak, become a false hand, and the purpose of God in giving man that member is frustrated.

What would happen if in our body one member should belie and deceive another, if the eye should tell the hand that glowing coals are roses, if the smell should persuade the taste that poison is not dangerous, or, if the eye should assure the feet that a pre-

cipice is a plain road? Would not the whole body suffer loss and perish? Would not such a body, as it in no way answers its purpose, be an insult to the Creator himself? The same may be said of a lying tongue; it is not only a dishonor to itself and to the whole body, but it also robs God of due honor. And should we not, since lying is so abominable a sin, avoid all lies, even by way of joke?

PART II.

Let us now look at the perniousness of lying. It injures—

1. *The individual man,* for if you lie to men, they think, speak, and act otherwise than they should, and in such a way suffer more or less loss. Suppose you lie by giving an incorrect price of an article you have bought, making out that it cost more than it really did. Well, the neighbor who believes you buys at the price you mentioned, and what is the consequence? He pays too much, and loses owing to your lie. I might say the same of a multitude of other lies, even of such as appear very insignificant and harmless. But it is especially the injurious lie that does a great deal of evil, for numberless people thereby lose house and home, the confidence of their fellow-men, honor and good name, position and means of livelihood.

2. *Religion and the Church.* It causes heresies and schisms and establishes many sects. If not, please tell me why in the lapse of centuries not only individuals, but whole nations, separated from the Catholic Church and formed new religious communities? History answers this question. It was false teachers that did not cease to disseminate and spread lies and calumnies against the Church, to misrepresent her doctrines and to charge her ministers with gross crimes. By degrees they succeeded in deluding many Catholics, and induced them to fall away from the Church. Why was the Church so bitterly hated and persecuted in the first centuries by the Gentiles? We find the reason again in lying tongues. They said that the Christians were opposed to the enlightenment of the people, just as in our days, that in secret they were doing every kind of mischief and committing the greatest crimes, for instance, that they killed little children in order to drink their blood; that they adored the head of an ass. The people believed these lies and calumnies and bore a deadly hatred against the Christians. Whence does it come that so few heretics return to mother Church, but live and die in error? From lies. In the religious instruction which they receive, in the books and writings which are put into their hands, the Catholic faith is misrepresented; they say of us that we adore the saints and their pictures; that consequently we are idolaters; that we pay

greater homage to Mary than to Jesus, our Redeemer: that we make the Pope God; that we pay money for the remission of sin and temporal punishment. And as these separated Christians receive these lies as truth the Catholic faith must appear despicable to them, and it is out of the question for them to be converted. Finally, whence does it come that especially in our days the Church has so many enemies, that she is hated and persecuted so much! Again from lies, for never before had the Church, with her doctrines, institutions and ministers, been so calumniated as at present. They represent the Church as an enemy of the State, affirming that she infringes on the rights of princes and people and interferes in things which do not concern her; that she is opposed to universal education. Such lies and calumnies spoken and written (and written especially in newspapers) are daily repeated; by little and little they are believed, and the number of those who despise and hate the Church becomes daily greater. What mischief lies cause, and how many souls in consequence perish, will never be made manifest till the last day. Considering all these things, need we wonder that in Sacred Scripture lying is called an abominable vice?

3. *The whole human family.* Suppose for a moment that lying were lawful, how would matters stand with human society? All confidence in one another would be lost. If you wanted to make a contract with a man, with all your prudence and circumspection you might be deceived, for the other party would not be bound to keep his word or to tell the truth. If you had a lawsuit, you could not call upon witnesses, and the judge could admit none, for how could any one rely on a witness who, when he lies, thinks he commits no sin? If anything whatever were narrated or asserted, you could not believe it because it might be fabricated. In short, if lying were lawful, all order in the world would vanish, and there would be such confusion that we could no longer live together.

4. *Most of all the liar himself.* A man who is known as a liar is not believed; he is shunned, despised, and detested. A pagan writer has said: "As the verge of the precipice, so I hate him whose tongue speaks otherwise than his heart thinks." God detests the liar and punishes him in time and in eternity: As an example we may cite Ananias and Saphira, who, on account of an apparently trivial lie, were punished with sudden death. In the Apocalypse liars are mentioned among the greatest malefactors, and it is said that their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone. It is true, not every lie is a mortal sin, but as every venial sin, carelessly committed, naturally draws mortal sins after it, so it is with a lie. Under the shadow of

lies every vice thrives, and only too true is what we read in the Book of Wisdom (1: 11) "the mouth that belieth, killeth the soul."

PERORATION.

Detest a lie, for no matter how insignificant it may be it is particularly heinous in the mouth of a Christian, who ought to esteem truth above all things. Lying is, at the same time, injurious, for it causes a great deal of mischief among men, and brings shame, disgrace and perdition upon the liar. Make a resolution always to speak the truth and say with Job: "As long as breath remaineth in me, and the Spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, neither shall my tongue contrive lying."—27: 3, 4. I conclude my sermon with the words of St. Jerome: "Your love for truth should be so great that you should consider whatever you say as an utterance on your oath." Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

SCANDAL.

These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. —*John* 16: 1.

Our Lord, in these words of my text, refers to the trials and persecutions which he had foretold in his farewell discourse on the eve of his passion, and to which he again alludes in the gospel of this day, telling his disciples that they would be put out of the synagogues, yea, that the hour would come when every one would think that he was doing a service to God by killing them. If he had not foretold them these persecutions, they would have been in danger of taking scandal; they might have believed that he was not the Son of God, the promised Redeemer, otherwise he would have taken more interest in his gospel and not permitted that, in the preaching of it they should be so sorely oppressed and persecuted. But now they could not be scandalized; on the contrary, their faith in Christ was confirmed when they saw his prophecy fulfilled. Thus our Lord employed his omni-

science and disclosed the future to his disciples, in order to preserve them from scandal. Carefully avoid giving scandal to any one, for it is one of the greatest sins, drawing the worst consequences after it. Unfortunately this sin is very frequently committed. I intend to show you to-day—

I. How we give scandal;
II. What ought to deter us from giving scandal.

Part I.

We give scandal—

1. By all sins, which are seen by others or in any way come to their knowledge; therefore *by words and deeds, and by the ommission of the good we are bound to do.*

(*a.*) *By words.* The tongue is the principal instrument for giving scandal. You give scandal when you teach a person how to commit sin, when you counsel or command something sinful, when you sanction and praise the evil he has done, when you consent to the sins of others, or keep silence when you ought to speak, or defend the evil done; when you scoff at the good a person is doing or going to do, ridicule him for it and endeavor to keep him from doing it. You give scandal when, in the presence of others, especially of your children, you break out into curses and invectives; but the greatest scandal you give is by unchaste words and songs, for they poison innocence, cause numberless bad thoughts, imaginations and desires, undermine modesty and the fear of God, and prepare the way for the most abominable excesses and vices. You give scandal by irreligious discourses, by scoffing at the truths of the faith and ecclesiastical ordinances, by slanderous words which you allow yourselves to utter against the clergy, for by such discourses you weaken and destroy in the hearts of your fellow-men their love and respect for the Church and incite them to unbelief.

(*b.*) *By deeds.* How numerous are these scandals? How much scandal is not given *by a passionate fondness for finery, by an immodest style of dress, by dances, theatres and other amusements*, which enervate the mind and promote impurity and other vices; *by bad books*, which call evil good, and good evil, and make use of all the weapons of the spirit of untruth in order to accomplish the work of perversion in town and country; *by immodest pictures and statues*, which no chaste eye can look at without bringing a blush of shame to the face. How much scandal is given to children by the bad example of fathers and mothers! If they disregard the

commandments of God and of his Church, their children will follow in their steps and give full scope to their sinful desires.

(*c.*) *By the omission of the good which we are bound to do.* You make yourselves guilty of this scandal when you do not prevent another's sin which you could and should prevent, when you do not admonish your subordinates to do good, or when you neglect the duties of your religion or state of life. Hence those parents give scandal who allow their children to keep company with persons of the opposite sex, to be out of the house half the night, and to participate in sinful amusements; who do not forbid them to curse, swear or speak unchaste words, and in general all that is evil and contrary to good morals; who do not urge them to do good, to hear mass, to receive the sacraments, and to perform their religious duties. Again, those parents give scandal who do not go to mass themselves, nor to confession and communion at least once a year; for their children will follow their bad example and also omit what they ought to do.

2. You can give scandal *with and without intention.*

(*a.*) *With intention, or purposely,* you give scandal when you aim at leading others into sin. To this class belong those enemies of the Catholic Church who circulate bad literature, in order to rob people of their faith; those impudent females who adorn themselves in every possible way, in order to attract the eyes of people and to ensnare men; those wicked men who employ all artifices and stratagems, in order to poison innocence; those wicked employers who aim at making their employees victims of their impure desires, those wicked people who, by their unchaste discourses, endeavor to ruin innocent persons, even children, in body and soul. People who give scandal on purpose, who are guilty of perverting others, are devils in human shape and cause more evil than the devil himself.

(*b.*) You give scandal *without intention* when you say, do, or omit anything which is an occasion of sin to your neighbor, but without having the will and intention of enticing him to sin. This unintentional scandal is sinful if you foresee, or with due reflection, could and should foresee, that what you say or do is calculated to be an occasion of sin to others. It is a groundless excuse to say: "I have no bad intention in my words and actions. I do not want anyone to be scandalized." It does not matter what your intention is, it is enough that you say or do what affords others an occasion of sin. What would you say if somebody should set fire to your house, and after the house was burned down, should excuse himself with this remark: "I did not mean

to do it." Would you not tell him: "No matter whether you willed it or not, you are the cause of my house being burned down?" If you aim at perverting any one, the crime is greater, but you commit the sin of scandal, even if you have *not the intention, by your bad words and actions.*

I must remark here that both intentional and unintentional scandal is sinful, *even if it remains unsuccessful*, that is, if it does no spiritual harm to our neighbor. He, therefore, who speaks unchaste words in the presence of others, especially of children, commits the sin of scandal, though nobody may suffer any injury. The reason is, because he voluntarily gives an occasion of sin, which is in itself sinful and always shews a want of love of our neighbor.

PART II.

We should be deterred from giving scandal—

1. *By the thought that he who gives scandal is a confederate of Satan, who by seduction to sin murders the soul which Jesus purchased with his blood.*

(*a.*) We know that the devil is man's worst enemy, for "as a roaring lion, he goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."—*I. Pet.* 5: 8. Perverters and scandal-givers do the same. They also labor for the ruin of men, for they rob souls of the grace of God, by their bad examples and their seductive artifices, plunging them into sin and vice, and finally into eternal perdition. The hunter makes use of certain birds to entice and catch other birds. The devil does the same in order to bring souls into his power. What he cannot do himself, he endeavors to accomplish through his decoy-birds, the givers of scandal. Through them he operates upon men and entices them to all evil; through them he prepares for others the most dangerous occasions and displays before their eyes the pleasure of sin; through them he robs others of the fear of God, makes them careless and impious; through them he plunges others into vice and keeps them therein till they become his prey. Thus perverters and scandal-givers are the confederates of Satan. Is there anything more reprehensible than this?

(*b.*) And can anything be imagined more terrible than killing souls by enticing them to sin? The murderer who takes away a man's life, the most precious of all earthly goods, commits an awful crime. But the crime of the scandal-giver is incomparably greater, because he ruins the immortal soul of his neighbor. Oh,

is it not far worse to lead a person into sin, and, thus cause his eternal damnation, than to take away his temporal life?

(*c.*) And what a sacrilege and outrage does he commit against Christ, *who has purchased these souls with his precious blood!* If an artist is irritated when some one with a sacrilegious hand destroys his painting, to complete which he worked for years most industriously, with what eyes will Christ look upon the scandal-giver and perverter when he stands before his tribunal? Will he not, in righteous anger, exclaim: "Miserable wretch, what have you done! You have destroyed my work for which I labored for thirty-three years; you have torn from me a soul for which I shed my blood."

2. *By the terrible consequences of this sin.* Scandal is like a spark that falls into a keg of powder; one grain of powder ignites the others and all together cause the most terrific explosion. Cain, the fratricide, gave scandal to his children and led them into vice. These again gave scandal to their children and descendants, and thus wickedness was handed down from one generation to another. At last the wicked descendants of Cain infected the descendants of Seth, who had been pious up to that time, with their moral disease, and thus it came that in the days of Noe the whole human race had degenerated to such a degree that God was under the necessity of destroying it by the deluge. How pernicious is scandal even now-a-days! Suppose a person in society speaks unchaste words, by which only one person is scandalized. He thinks of it, reflects on it, the evil concupiscence is awakened in him, he consents to temptations and at first sins in thoughts and desires, and afterwards in words and actions. These sins may swell to thousands in the course of time. But scandal never remains limited to one person, it passes on to many others, the scandalized and perverted always scandalizing and perverting others. And thus it may happen that by one scandal hundreds and thousands of souls are plunged into sin and eternal damnation. Those who have given scandal may be dead long ago, but the sins of their scandal continue to live, and spreading more and more, are handed down from generation to generation.

3. *By the terrible sentence of Christ upon him who gives scandal.* "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." —*Matt.* 18: 6. I must remark here, that among ancient nations only the greatest malefactors were drowned, or their bodies were thrown into the water after execution. Our Lord, by saying that those who give scandal should be drowned in the depth of the

sea, indicates the greatness of the sin they commit; by adding that they should be drowned with a mill-stone about their neck, he means to say that their death ought to be certain, so that they may cause no more mischief in the world. And Christ concludes these words with the exclamation, "Woe to the world because of scandals." He does not say, woe to the world because of sickness and pestilence, famine and war, tribulations and persecutions, but "woe to the world because of scandals," for scandal is the evil of evils and causes nothing but mischief for time and eternity.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, the question arises, what must those who have given scandal do in order to be forgiven by God? First of all, they must humbly and with a contrite heart confess the scandal given; that is, they must confess not only the sin, but also all the aggravating circumstances connected therewith, and must disclose to what class of persons and to how many they have given scandal, and to what particular sins they have induced them. Then they must, to the best of their ability, repair the injury caused by the scandal. For this end they must, as far as possible, entreat, instruct and implore the scandalized and perverted to amend their lives; they must give them a good example and pray for their conversion, and impose works of penance upon themselves. It is only by these and similar acts that they may yet hope to find grace with God. Let it not, however, come to pass that you will be obliged to seek your salvation on this hard road. With the greatest possible care beware of giving scandal, say and do nothing that might be an offense to your neighbor; labor rather for the salvation of souls, and "so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16. Amen.

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

LESSON. *Acts* 2: 1-11. When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome; Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Our Blessed Lord had frequently, but especially just before his Ascension into heaven, promised his Apostles that he would send them the Holy Ghost. "John indeed," he said to them, "baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."—*Acts* 1: 5-8. On this day this promise was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles and the Christians, and imparted to them the gifts of

his grace. Let us make this grand mystery the subject of our meditation according to the lesson of this day and propose to ourselves the three following questions:

I. When, where, and on whom did the Holy Ghost descend?
II. How did he come down?
III. What effect has his coming produced?

Part I.

When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place. Here St. Luke tells us—

1. *At what time the Holy Ghost came down.* This event took place on the day of Pentecost. The Jews had their Pentecost, and it was one of their principal festival days. They celebrated it, as we do, fifty days after Easter, hence the name *Pentecost*, which means the *fiftieth day*. The Jewish Pentecost had been instituted, first, in thanksgiving for the harvest, which began with Easter and ended fifty days afterwards; secondly, in memory of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, which occurred fifty days after their first Easter in Egypt or after their departure from it. In this double relation the Jewish Pentecost is a type of the Christian. The Christian Pentecost is, as it were, a harvest-home in a spiritual sense, for on this day the Church of Christ was introduced into the world and three thousand believers were added to its fold. In like manner it is a feast of legislation, because on it, the New Law, the Christian religion, was for the first time preached at Jerusalem by the Apostles filled with the Holy Ghost. The day of our baptism was for us the gracious day on which we were introduced into the Church of Christ. What does our conscience tell us? Have we been thankful for this unmerited grace of God and have we always faithfully fulfilled our duties as Catholics?

2. *Where did the Holy Ghost come down? "In one place."* What place was it? It was undoubtedly that upper room or *Cœnaculum* in Jerusalem where Christ on the eve of his sacred passion ate the Last Supper with his disciples. After the death of their Master the Apostles were generally here, the doors being closed for fear of the Jews; here, in prayer, they expected the Holy Ghost according to the instruction received from their divine Master. Solitude and prayer are two of the principal means whereby we receive the Holy Ghost with his graces. The Holy Ghost loves solitude, and honors with his presence only those souls whose pleasure it is to lead a retired life; consequently he

finds not indwelling and adoration in the hearts of those who give themselves to the distractions of a worldly life and are found in places of amusement. Hence we see that all the saints, in whose hearts the Holy Ghost produced great things, loved solitude, and that many of them left the world and embraced the monastic life. Avoid all unnecessary intercourse with the world and its frivolous and immoral pleasures; lead as much as possible a retired life, that the Holy Ghost may abide with you. Make use of prayer, for "your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask him."—*Luke* 11: 13.

3. *On whom did the Holy Ghost descend? On all those who were together in one place.* The *Cœnaculum* in Jerusalem represents to us the whole Church of Christ; for here were assembled the Apostles, Mary the Virgin Mother of God, and the other believers, in all about a hundred and twenty persons. Since only those received the Holy Ghost, the important truth is indicated that the Holy Ghost dwells and dispenses his graces only in the Holy Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Christ. As the dove which Noe sent forth from the ark found no place where to rest (*Gen.* 8: 9), so the Holy Ghost will abide with, purify and sanctify men nowhere but in the Catholic Church. What a blessing that we are children of the Catholic Church! Let us appreciate this grace above all things, and let us pray for the conversion of heretics and infidels.

PART II.

How did the Holy Ghost descend?

1. *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.* That sound was not natural, for it came suddenly, not beginning gently; it came from heaven, that is, from above, whence no storm arises. In this sudden sound we see intimated how the Holy Ghost is accustomed to act; men entirely infatuated and buried in temporal things he often transforms in a moment into enlightened and spiritual beings. Examples: St. Paul, St. Magdalen, and many others. "Oh what a Master is the Holy Ghost; he needs no time for anything he wishes to teach; by touching a soul he teaches; to touch and to teach are one and the same thing; for as soon as he enlightens the human heart he changes its desires, he removes at once what was, and gives what was not."—*St. Gregory the Great.*

2. The sound filled the whole house and thence spread through all Jerusalem; a great multitude of people gathered together to

see what was the matter. Hereby the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost in the Church is pointed out, from which his graces flow upon all the nations of the earth.

3. *The sound resembled a mighty wind coming.* The wind is swift, hurrying in a few minutes to far distant places. Thus Christianity was spread with wonderful rapidity over the whole earth. In the time of the Apostles numerous congregations of Christians were everywhere formed, and after a few years, not only thousands, but millions of Jews and heathens entered the Christian Church. The mighty wind coming also signifies the irresistible power with which the Christian religion overcame all obstacles in its way, Jews and Gentiles resisting and straining every nerve to hinder its propagation, nay, to destroy it. But their exertions were in vain. After three hundred years they were conquered, their temples crumbled into dust, and the cross triumphed. Equally as powerful and wonderful was the influence of the Christian religion in the hearts of men, subduing their evil passions, extirpating sins and vices, planting the most exalted virtues, and renewing the face of the earth. *And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them.*

4. These tongues, resembling flames of fire, were not the Holy Ghost himself, but only a visible form under which he manifested himself. The Holy Ghost appeared in the form of fire, to signify that he and his essence are love; that he inflames the hearts of men with the fire of charity, and that the Christian Law rests on the love of God and of our neighbor. The Holy Ghost in the form of fire also indicates the effects which he produces in the hearts of men. Fire purifies, illuminates, ignites and unites. The Holy Ghost does all this. He purifies the soul from the stains of sin; he enlightens the understanding with the knowledge of what is unto salvation; he inflames the will for the love of God and of our neighbor; he causes us to disdain earthly things and to fix our affections on things above; finally, he unites the soul with himself and imparts to it his graces in such a manner that by perfect love it becomes one with him. How fervently should we desire these graces, and having received them, how carefully should we strive to preserve them!

5. *The Holy Ghost appeared in the form of tongues.* This signifies the gift of tongues which the Holy Ghost imparted to the Apostles and afterwards to many missionaries. The tongues were *parted.* These parted tongues symbolize the variety of gifts which flow to the faithful through the Holy Ghost.—*I. Cor.* 12: 8-11. The sitting of the tongues, as it were, on every one of

them, signifies the continuance of the Holy Ghost with the Apostles and the Church, as Christ himself says: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16.

PART III.

In the lesson of this day we are told what effects the Holy Ghost produced in the Apostles and the other believers: *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.*

1. St. Luke first speaks of the effects of grace in general, saying, *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* Hereby he expresses that the Apostles received the Holy Ghost in his plenitude. They had already received the Holy Ghost at their baptism, and when Christ invested them with the power of forgiving sin; not however in his plenitude and with all the effects of his grace; but now they received him in a superabundant measure. Hitherto, they were not docile, and could not understand many things which Christ taught, now they were so enlightened in divine things that they confounded all the wisdom of the learned. Hitherto they were timid, and dared not appear among the Jews; now they had a courage which no threat, no persecution, no martyrdom, nor even death could intimidate. Hitherto they were infected with various faults; now they were free from imperfections and showed themselves to be models of sanctity.

2. A special gift which the Holy Ghost imparted to the Apostles, is *the gift of tongues.* All at once they spoke various languages which they had never learned, and they not only understood one another, but they were also understood by others. This gift of languages was necessary to them for their high calling, for, according to the commission of Christ they were to preach the gospel to all the nations of the earth. We need not assume that the Apostles always spoke and understood the languages which they spoke on Whit-Sunday; but this much is certain that through the Holy Ghost they always could speak those languages which, in the preaching of the gospel among the people of any nation, were necessary for them. Many preachers of the faith, after the Apostolic age, possessed this same gift of languages. St. Irenæus says that he himself heard many speak divers languages, which the Holy Ghost had taught them. St. Pachomius obtained after three hours' prayer the gift of speaking in the Latin language with a brother from Rome. St. Dominic, by fervent prayer, obtained for himself and his companions the gift of the German language in order to be able to preach the gospel to the Germans. It is a well known and

authenticated fact that St. Francis Xavier spoke the languages of various nations which he had never learned, as fluently and correctly as if he had been born and educated in them. If we had no other proof of the truth and divinity of our holy Catholic faith than the gift of languages, which the Church enjoyed from the beginning, this alone ought to suffice, for the gift of languages convinces us that the Holy Ghost has been operating in the Catholic Church at all times.

3. We are also told what effects the descent of the Holy Ghost, which was accompanied by so many miracles, had on the others who were present. Ever since the Assyrian captivity, which had taken place more than seven hundred years previously, and the Babylonian captivity, a hundred years later, many of the Jews were dispersed and resided among various nations and spoke their languages. Many of these Jews came to Jerusalem, not only at Easter, but also at Pentecost and the feast of tabernacles, according to the Law, to adore God in the temple. When these Jews who had come from foreign lands heard the sound of the mighty wind coming, and the inspired discourses of the Apostles in foreign languages, they were very much astonished, and said: *Are not all these that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born?* Peter arose, and explained to the astonished multitudes the significance of the wonder of the day, and exhorted them in words piercing heart and soul to do penance. The sermon of St. Peter was crowned with the most brilliant success, for three thousand were converted, embraced the Christian faith and were baptized.

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you the contents of the lesson for this festival. The same Holy Ghost that on the first Christian Pentecost, over eighteen hundred years ago, descended on the Apostles and the other believers and filled them with his gifts, dwells to-day in the holy Catholic Church and imparts to us in her and through her, his graces. He enlightens us, that we may know what is good and pleasing to God; he strengthens us, that we may fulfil the duties of religion and of our state of life, and serve God in every situation of life; he sanctifies us in the sacraments and makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. Let us avail ourselves of these graces with fervor and fidelity, that with the aid of them we may work out our salvation. **Amen.**

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

GOSPEL. *John* 14: 23-31. At that time Jesus said to his disciples: If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.

2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

CHRIST GIVES HIS DISCIPLES AN INSTRUCTION ON THE LOVE OF GOD, PROMISES THEM THE HOLY GHOST, AND CONSOLES THEM FOR HIS DEPARTURE.

It is ten days since our Lord ascended into heaven. It is a sad time for the Apostles; they are orphans; their Teacher, Comforter, and Protector has left them. There is only one thing that can mitigate their sorrow and sustain their courage, namely, Christ's promise that he would send them another Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Thus he says in the gospel of this day: *The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.* This consoling promise is fulfilled to-day. The Apostles, with Mary, the Mother of God, and the other believers, are assembled in that upper chamber at Jerusalem, praying and longing for the Holy Ghost. Suddenly there comes a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind; parted tongues

as it were of fire, descend upon them, and they are filled with the Holy Ghost. The gospel contains three points:

I. Christ gives his disciples an instruction on the love of God;
II. He promises them the Holy Ghost;
III. He consoles them for his departure.

PART I.

1. *If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.* In these words Christ teaches—

(*a.*) *What is required for the love of God.* We must keep his word, that is, *we must believe what he teaches and commands.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. If without faith it is impossible to please God, it is evident that without faith we cannot love him; God is pleased only with those who love him. Christ himself says: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned."—*Mark* 16: 16. As no one who truly loves God will be condemned, it is evident that where there is no faith there is no love. Faith is the root and beginning of all Christian justice; without faith no one is purified from his sins and sanctified. We therefore in vain seek justice with unbelievers, since without the love of God there is no justice. From this it follows that all those unbelievers and heretics who, through their own fault, have not the Catholic faith, do not and cannot possess the love of God. From this you perceive what you are to think of those who say that "it matters not what a man's faith is; all religions are alike; they are only different roads that lead to the same place; let a man only act rightly, and he can throw all creeds overboard; whether Jew, Pagan, Protestant or Catholic, it makes no difference." Such indifference is in direct opposition to the doctrine of Christ, and leads straight to perdition.

Moreover, we must keep the commandments of God. This is in the nature of love. If we truly love any one, we try to please him and take care not to offend him; we love to do his will; his wishes are to us commands. If, therefore, we have true love of God, we shall always strive to act conformably to his holy will, and conscientiously observe all his commandments. Hence Christ emphatically says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."—*John* 14: 21. And St. John says: "This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments."—*I. John* 5: 3. He therefore who violates a commandment of God in an important matter, or, what amounts to the same thing, commits mortal sin, such as cursing, blasphemy, fornication, adultery, or lives in enmity with his neighbor, tells

God a lie whenever he says: "My God, I love thee." And how many are there who tell such a lie every time they make an act of love!

(*b.*) *How richly the love of God is rewarded.* Christ assures us that his Father loves those that love him, and that he, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, will come to them and make his abode with them. Is there anything more desirable than to be loved by God? Oh, what a happiness to be able to say: "God loves me!" Oh, this love is infinitely more valuable than all the love and friendship of men, for when God loves us he treats us as his children, enriches us with his graces, and makes us heirs of heaven. Nay, more, if we love God we become his holy temples. The triune God comes to us and makes his permanent abode in our hearts, as the Apostle says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—*I. Cor.* 3: 16. How honored would a poor man feel if his king should come and dwell in his hut! What an honor and a grace for us that the triune God comes and dwells in us! And he comes to us not empty-handed, but as a dispenser of graces, who enlightens, encourages and strengthens us in all good, purifies and sanctifies us more and more, and imparts to us with the greatest liberality all that we need for obtaining life everlasting. Oh, let us always preserve a pure and undefiled heart, that we may never lose the gracious presence of God.

2. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.* In these words Christ teaches us—

(*a.*) *Who those are that exclude themselves from his blessed promises*, and who therefore cannot expect that God will love them and take his abode with them. They are those who do not keep the word of Christ, that is, who refuse to do what he lays upon them as an obligation. How great is their number! Christ says: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (*Matt.* 11: 29); and how many are there who allow themselves to be governed by anger, pride and ambition! He says: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (*Matt.* 6: 33); and how many are there who care only for worldly things and neglect the service of God and the business of their salvation! He says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (*Matt.* 16: 24); and how many are there who give full scope to their inordinate passions and inclinations and will not hear of mortification, self-denial and the carrying of the cross. He says: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father

also is merciful" (*Luke* 6: 36); and how many are there who are unmerciful towards the poor and the needy, who even try to take advantage of the necessities of their fellow-men! He says: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses" (*Matt.* 6: 15); and how many are there who, for months and years, live in enmity with their neighbor and refuse to forgive. He says: "Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (*Matt.* 5: 26); and how many are there who sin by theft, cheating, injustice, and who possess the goods of others without making restitution! Examine yourselves and see whether you are not of the great number of those who act contrary to the teaching of Christ.

(*b.*) *How grievously those sin who disregard the teaching of Christ.* The word of Christ is not the word of man, but the word of God. *The word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.* He, therefore, who disregards and does not observe the word of Christ, sins against God the Father, and incurs his displeasure, because the Church teaches and prescribes only what Christ taught and commanded; to be disobedient to the Church is to be disobedient to Christ and to our heavenly Father; in other words, it is to sin grievously. Therefore Christ says: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. From this you see how blind those Christians are who disregard the precepts of the Church and say "this is only a precept of the Church, and does not signify much." Christ means that he who transgresses a precept of the Church sins as grievously as if he violated a commandment of God, for the precepts of the Church are in reality nothing but the precepts of God, since the Church is the representative of God on earth, and it is in his name and by his commission that she enacts laws.

Part III.

The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you. Let us consider these words in which Christ promises his disciples the Holy Ghost.

1. Christ calls the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity the *Holy Ghost* for two reasons, namely, on account of his source and of his external operation. Sanctity consists in the love of God. But the Third Person in the Deity, having his source in the mutual love of the Father and Son, and, consequently, being the essential, reciprocal love of the Father and the Son, we justly call him *Holy*—the Holy Ghost, although the other two Persons are

equally as holy. But we call him so, because his operation has particularly the sanctification of man for its object. It is the Holy Ghost who by his graces prepares us for sanctification and in the sacraments really sanctifies us. Hence the Apostle says: "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God." —*I. Cor.* 6: 11.

2. *The Paraclete.* The Holy Ghost has this name on account of his blessed effects in the hearts of men, enlightening, justifying, and making them heirs of heaven. Can there be anything more consoling than to know God and his holy will, and to be allowed to say: I possess sanctifying grace, I am a child of God and I have the well-grounded hope of being one day an heir of heaven? Truly this is a delight which the world, with all its false and fleeting joys, cannot give—a comfort which raises our drooping spirits in the hour of trial, and replenishes us with courage and holy joy.

3. *Whom the Father will send in my name.* In these words Christ expresses the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. He speaks of the Father, who sends; he speaks of himself, in whose name God the Father sends; and he speaks of the Holy Ghost, who is sent. Christ in saying; "Whom the Father will send in *my name*", means that "God the Father will send the Holy Ghost that he may supply my place." Our Lord ascended into heaven after the accomplishment of the work of Redemption; in his place the Holy Ghost was to descend upon earth and to make his permanent abode in the Church of Christ, in order to purify and to sanctify all men for all time. *In my name,* may also be understood as, *in virtue of my merits.* God the Father sent the Holy Ghost only on account of the merits of Christ. If Christ had not died for us on the cross, the Holy Ghost would not not have come to us; he has been sent to us for the purpose of applying to us the fruits of Redemption. All the graces therefore which we receive from the Holy Ghost we owe to the merits of Jesus Christ. Let us not forget this, but be thankful for it to our Lord, shewing this by faithfully adhering to him.

4. The words: *He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said,* have this meaning: The Holy Ghost will cause the Apostles perfectly to understand all those things which Christ has said to them, but which up to that time had remained to them in a great measure unintelligible and obscure, and they will now remember all those things which they had forgotten. This was actually the case. After the Holy Ghost had come down upon the Apostles, the scales fell

from their eyes, and all that Christ had spoken became perfectly clear to them; the Holy Ghost instructed them in such a manner that they confounded the learned of this world in matters relating to religion; he inspired them with all that they should teach, write, and speak before the tribunals; supported by his uninterrupted guidance they possessed the gift of infallibility, so that in matters of faith and morals they could not err. The Holy Ghost is the same teacher of truth to the Catholic Church at all times as he was to the Apostles.

Even to the end of the world, enlightened and governed by him, the Church can teach nothing but the truth; in all that she proposes to be believed she is as infallible as the Holy Ghost, for the simple reason that the Holy Ghost speaks by her mouth; and whatever she teaches is the word of God in the strictest sense. For this reason St. Paul calls the Church "the pillar and ground of the truth" (*I. Tim.* 3: 15); and St. Augustine says: "I would not believe even the gospel, if the authority of the Church did not induce me." Oh, how peacefully can we live and die in the bosom of the Catholic Church, where we have the fullest guarantee that whatever she teaches and ordains is the pure, genuine, unadulterated word of God. Let us therefore show our gratitude to God for this great grace by obeying the Church and making frequent use of her means of grace.

Part III.

After promising his disciples the Holy Ghost, *our Lord consoled them for his departure.*

1. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth do I give unto you.* When the Jews took leave of persons they said: "Peace be with you." So does Christ, being about to leave his disciples; it is the eve of his sacred passion when he speaks to them these words. His wish is not a mere empty one, but he gives them peace in reality; he is omnipotent and can give whatever he wishes, for he has only to will, and it is done. Now the question is: What kind of peace is it that he wishes his Apostles and their successors? It is peace *with God, with our neighbor,* and *with ourselves.* Peace with God, which reconciles us with God and makes us his children; peace with our neighbor, since he made love the principal commandment, and wills that we regard one another as brothers and sisters; peace with ourselves, since it takes away the sins which lie heavily on our conscience. He who possesses this triple peace, is, even in sufferings and afflictions, full of tranquillity, consolation and joy,

and has already on earth a foretaste of the felicity which awaits him hereafter. The Apostles really had this peace; hence we see them going away from the council, rejoicing that they were deemed worthy to suffer ignominy for the name of Jesus; we see St. Peter sleeping quietly in prison, although he knows that he is to die the following day; we hear St. Paul, in his countless sufferings and tribulations, exclaiming: "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." You also can become partakers of this extremely precious, holy, peace, by shunning sin, mortifying all inordinate desires and passion, and keeping a pure conscience; this is the only way to obtain peace. He apeaks also of the peace of the world; but this is a false, delusive peace. Whatever the world can give, temporal goods and enjoyments, does not satisfy the human heart, but creates only cares, disquietude and disgust; it is perishable and ends with death. Who would be so foolish as to strive for the peace of the world and seek his happiness upon earth?

2. *Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you.* Here Christ gives his disciples another reason for consolation, assuring them that he was not going away from them for ever, but that he would come to them again. On the third day he rose from the dead, and remained forty days upon earth, appearing to them frequently. Even at his Ascension he did not take leave of them for ever, for after a few years he called them from this valley of tears to himself in heaven. What a sweet consolation for Christians! If a near and dear friend, a father, a mother, a brother or a sister, a wife or a husband, is snatched away from you by death, do not yield to immoderate grief; if you employ this fleeting life for the service of God, you have the sweet hope that you will be united with your deceased friends for ever in heaven.

3. *If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.* In saying: *The Father is greater than I,* Christ refers to his humanity, for, as God, he is as great as the Father, perfectly equal to him, as he elsewhere says: "I and the Father are one."—*John* 10: 30. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine."—*John* 16: 15. The above words have this meaning: If you have my welfare, upon which yours depends, at heart, you will not grieve at my departure, but rejoice, for the Father, to whom I go, is the greater, and he will give me greater things; he will raise me from the state of my humiliation, which I occupy upon earth, to the state of the greatest glory, and will give me a name that is above all names so that in my name every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. This my glorification will also

profit you, because in heaven you will partake of it. This comforting thought also applies to us if we labor like the Apostles to be true servants and followers of Christ, and especially if we carry our cross cheerfully after him, "for if we be dead with him, we shall live also with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."—*II. Tim.* 2: 11, 12.

4. Finally, Christ declares to his disciples that he spoke to them of his going away, that their faith might be strengthened, because they would be convinced that his words are fulfilled; consequently that he is omniscient and true, and therefore the Son of God. He also says I will not now speak many things with you, for the moment approaches when Satan will take my life through the Jews, his instruments; but, as Satan has no claim on me, the Innocent, I will not suffer death as if he had any power over me, but only that I may do the will of my Father. This again was a consolation for his disciples. He died innocent and voluntarily, out of love for us, to redeem and save us. What consolation for the Apostles when they considered: Christ suffers and dies like the greatest malefactor, but he is innocence itself, and it was only his love that nailed him to the cross.

There is no greater consolation for us than to be able to say on our death-bed: "I suffer death, but Satan finds nothing in me that he can call his own; my death does not take place by virtue of any power that the devil has over me; I die, and with my death I offer to God a sacrifice of obedience and love." Well for us if in our dying hour we can say with the Apostle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me."—*II. Tim.* 4: 7, 8.

PERORATION.

In conclusion Christ says: "Arise, let us go hence."—*John* 14: 31. With these words Christ signifies his determination, according to the will of his heavenly Father, to make the last sacrifice for the Redemption of mankind, to go unto sufferings and death. Let us show our gratitude for this sacrifice by doing cheerfully and without delay what we know to be our duty and the will of God, no matter with how many obstacles and difficulties it may be attended. We certainly do not say in vain every day: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Let us be ready to die when God wills it. Of all that we possess in this world nothing is more precious than our life; if we make a sacrifice of it to God and leave it to him entirely when, where, and

how he may call us into eternity, this is the greatest and most acceptable sacrifice to him, and we may confidently hope that death will be to us what it was to Christ—" going to our Father in heaven." Amen.

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH AND IN OUR SOULS.

The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.—John 14: 26.

Christ kept his word. He had frequently promised his Apostles that after his departure to his Father he would send them the Holy Ghost. This promise was fulfilled on this day. Whilst the Apostles and the other believers were assembled in the same place in Jerusalem, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and the Holy Ghost descended upon them, in the form of fiery tongues, and filled them with his graces. Fortified with this spirit of truth and strength, they began their apostolic mission, preaching the gospel and receiving into the Christian Church all those Jews and Gentiles who believed. With justice therefore we begin a new cycle of feasts with Pentecost, for with it a new era begins; the law of grace is announced, and the nations of the earth subject themselves to it. The cycle of the feasts of Pentecost represents to us the time which began with the mission of the Holy Ghost, the establishment and propagation of the Church of Christ, whose duration extends to the end of the world. We have the happiness to live in this time of grace and to belong to the Church of Christ, in whom the Holy Ghost has taken his permanent abode, in order to apply in her and through her the fruits of Redemption to mankind. Let us consider to-day the twofold missions of the Holy Ghost, which he has ever since continued and will continue to the end of time—

I. To teach, sanctify and govern the Church;
II. To enlighten, console, strengthen and sanctify every individual soul.

Part I.

The Church is the living Christ upon earth. As Christ, for the Redemption of mankind, was necessarily obliged to unite in himself two natures, the divine and the human, so the Church must have in herself something human as well as divine, in order to impart to men the grace of Redemption. This is really the case. The Church, like her Founder, has her human nature, for she consists of human beings; but, like Christ, she has something divine, and this is the Holy Ghost, whom he promised and sent. The Holy Ghost is not hypostatically or personally united with the Church, as the humanity and divinity are united in Christ; but he will abide with the Church for ever according to the promise of Christ: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16. It is the Holy Ghost that enables the Church to do all that is required for the salvation of men. I shall mention only three of his effects as regards the Church.

1. *The Holy Ghost teaches the Church.*

The Church has been commissioned to teach all nations. "Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them. . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." —*Matt.* 28: 19, 20. Now the question is: Could the Church, depending on her own strength alone, preach the doctrine of Christ pure and unadulterated? By no means; for the Church is composed of human beings; the Pope is a man; the bishops are men; so are the priests. But men are not infallible; they may err and lead others into error. If the Church were a purely human institution she would be liable to err, and we should have no security that what she teaches is the pure word of God.

It is evident, then, that the Church, in order to be infallible in her teaching, must not be limited to her human strength, but must contain something divine; and she does, for Christ sent her the Holy Ghost with the assurance that he would abide with her for ever. Now the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth, and is given to the Church principally to teach her all truth, according to what Christ emphatically says in the gospel of this day: *The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.* Hence what the Church teaches is not the word of man; it is the word of God; the Holy Ghost teaches us through the Church and makes use of her mouth to bring to our knowledge all that is necessary for us to believe and do in order to be saved. We must therefore believe the Church, because it is

the Holy Ghost that preaches to us the word of God through her. Let us then faithfully adhere to the doctrine of the Church.

2. *The Holy Ghost sanctifies the Church.*

The merits of Christ are as a fountain of living water of which the children of the Church cannot avail themselves except by divine help, or grace. This grace is imparted to us by the Holy Ghost, who enkindles in our souls the desire of sanctity, assists us in complying with all the conditions required, and, at last confers on us sanctifying grace. "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 11. We are sanctified by the holy sacraments, especially by baptism, in which man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost (*John* 3: 5); and by the Sacrament of Penance, in which our sins are forgiven by virtue of the Holy Ghost. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."—*John* 20: 22, 23. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which we receive the fulness of the grace of the Holy Ghost, we are strengthened against the attacks of our spiritual enemies. We should therefore be very thankful to God for our vocation to the Holy Catholic Church; among the Protestant sects no sacraments are administered, except baptism.

3. *The Holy Ghost directs and governs the Church.*

(*a.*) He confers upon bishops and priests their power. The Pope, bishops and priests have their power not from man but from the Holy Ghost. "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was."—*Heb.* 5: 4. Again: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God."—*Acts.* 20: 28. And St. Chrysostom says: "If it were not for the Holy Ghost, there would be no shepherds and teachers in the Church."

(*b.*) As kings govern their kingdoms by their officers, so the Holy Ghost governs the Church by the pastors as his instruments, and defends her against all enemies, so that the gates of hell can never prevail against her. The Holy Catholic Church has existed already more than eighteen hundred years. What changes have taken place upon earth during this long interval of time! How many kingdoms and empires have arisen, become great and powerful, but have either fallen, or been supplanted by others!

Unlike the human institutions of men, the Church of Christ alone has stood the test of time. Macaulay's lazy traveler, wher-

ever he be to-day, may seek his broken arch at leisure, for he will never have an opportunity of sketching her mighty ruins. Armed only with the weapons of the Divine Word, of prayer, of patience and of tears, she stands to-day immovable on the rock of Peter, where Christ placed her, and has overcome prolonged and most atrocious persecutions and all the attacks of her interior and exterior enemies, coming forth victorious from all her contests. She has had, it is true, many and grievous losses to deplore, millions of her children have apostatized, but she has been richly compensated for this defection, and she has always put forth new branches, like a stately tree planted by the running waters. It is evident, then, that a higher power protects the Church, for if she were dependent on human help she would have long ago shared the fate of the works and institutions of men, and vanished from the earth. The Holy Ghost is at the helm of Peter's bark, and directs, governs and defends her against all her visible and invisible, interior and exterior, enemies, steering her safely through the billows and breakers of time, without losing a single spar, into the port of eternity.

Part II.

All graces are imparted to us by the Holy Ghost. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost."—*I. Cor.* 12: 3. We owe him especially the following graces:

1. The *Holy Ghost enlightens us*, so that we may know what is true, good and salutary. We witness this effect in the Apostles. Although our Saviour had been teaching them for three years, they remained "foolish and slow of heart to believe."—*Luke* 24: 25. When the Holy Ghost came down upon them, he taught them all truth. Illiterate fishermen, who never before spoke in public, announce and defend the religion of Christ crucified, before princes, learned men and nations of every tongue. The Holy Ghost enlightens us too. We cannot believe as God requires of us except by divine grace. He enlightens our understanding, that we may know ourselves, especially when we are about to make our confession.

2. The Holy Ghost consoles us in all the tribulations of life. When Jesus was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples, saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."—*John* 14: 27. After the day of Pentecost the Apostles were ever full of joy in all their tribulations. When told that they should preach no longer in the name of Jesus, they said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."—*Acts* 5: 29. And

when scourged, "they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were acounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."—*Acts* 5: 41. The same spirit will console us, if we struggle to keep our hearts undefiled by sin and free from inordinate inclinations, loving God with our whole heart.

3. The Holy Ghost strengthens us, according to the promise of Christ: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."—*Acts* 1: 8. The Apostles, who so feared the Jews that they concealed themselves; who had forsaken their divine Master at the hour of probation, displayed an unbounded courage after the coming of the Holy Ghost. Peter preached publicly: "Let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ this same Jesus whom you have crucified."—*Acts* 2: 36. All the Apostles now commenced their missionary labors, saying with St. Paul: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? (As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death, all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)" —*Rom.* 8: 35, 36. The Holy Ghost strengthens us in our warfare with our enemies. Without him we cannot conceive a salutary thought. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* 4: 13.

4. The Holy Ghost *sanctifies our souls.* Before his coming the Apostles were subject to many imperfections and frailties. They were not meek of heart (*Luke* 9: 52-56); they were ambitious, every one desirous of the first position in the kingdom of their master. Peter went so far as to deny his Lord. But after the descent of the Holy Ghost they are conspicuous for their humility, meekness and charity: they are at once men of heroic virtue and of extraordinary charity. The Holy Ghost also imparts to us sanctifying grace and with it the three theological virtues, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, and all the moral virtues. We receive with sanctifying grace the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, in the measure needed to enable as to serve God and attain our salvation. Nay, more, if the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, he comes to us himself and makes his abode with us. "The charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."—*Rom.* 5: 5. "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God?"—*I. Cor.* 6: 19.

PERORATION.

These are the effects of the Holy Ghost in the Church and in our soul. The Holy Ghost is the invisible Teacher of the Church;

enlightened by him, she preserves the divine doctrine in the most perfect purity and preaches it to the world, pure and undefiled. The Holy Ghost is also the Guide and Ruler of the Church; he it is who chooses her ministers and assists them in the discharge of their office; he it is who not only defends her against all enemies and preserves her, but causes her to be propagated to the uttermost parts of the world. He it is who enlightens us, that we may know what is right and pleasing to God, and who also gives us strength to do what is right. He it is who consoles us in all the tribulations of life; he it is who sanctifies us. Yes, he will do all these things for us if we avoid sin, for by sin the Holy Ghost is driven out of our hearts. "For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding, and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in."—*Wisd.* 1:5. Let us then pray to the Holy Ghost to enlighten and strengthen us all the days of our life, that we may live holily and make a happy end. **Amen.**

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.—*John* 14:26.

The solemn festival which we celebrate to-day is called Pentecost. This name comes from the Greek word *Pentecoste*, which means the *fiftieth*. The feast of to-day is thus named because it is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. It was formerly called "the day of the Holy Ghost", because on Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles. There is no doubt that this feast dates back to the earliest days of Christianity and is of apostolic origin, for it was but natural for the Apostles to commemorate annually the day on which the Holy Ghost descended upon them. The apostolic constitutions ordain the celebration of Pentecost in these words: "The great feast of Pentecost be to you ten days after the Ascension of Christ, or on the fiftieth day after the first Sunday (Easter Sunday), for on it the Lord Jesus sent to us the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the third

hour." We will make the mission of the Holy Ghost the subject of our meditation, answering the three following questions:

I. When and where did the coming of the Holy Ghost take place?
II. How did it take place?
III. What effects did it produce?

PART I.

1. As St. Luke relates in the Acts of the **Apostles, the mission** of the Holy Ghost took place on Pentecost.

(*a.*) The feast of Pentecost was one of the **three principal feasts** of the Jews, and was called the feast of weeks, because it was celebrated seven weeks or fifty days after Easter. This feast was instituted chiefly in thanksgiving for the harvest that had been gathered in, which in the land of the Jews began at Easter and ended with Pentecost. On this feast two loaves and the first fruits were offered up with great solemnity. Later the Jews celebrated the feast of Pentecost in memory of the Law given on Mount Sinai, for which reason it was also called the feast of the Law.

(*b.*) This Jewish feast of Pentecost was a type of the Christian, whether we consider it as the harvest festival, or as the feast of the Law. Our Christian Pentecost is, in truth, a harvest festival, for on it Christ ripened the fruit, which is the Holy Ghost, by sending him; it is also a feast of the first fruits, because three thousand souls were added as first fruits to the Church of Christ. Pentecost is also a feast of the Law, because on it the New Law was solemnly promulgated. For as the Israelites received the divine Law after their delivery from the slavery of Egypt and on the fiftieth day after their Easter, engraved on stone tablets, so the New Law of love and grace was inscribed by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the redeemed on the fiftieth day after Easter, when Jesus had accomplished the work of our redemption and delivered us from the thraldom of Satan. On this day the Jewish Church ceased, and from it the Church of Christ dates her beginning. Christ had already founded the Church, but it was hidden like a babe that still lies under the heart of its mother; to-day she came forth from her hiding-place and celebrated her birthday. As children rejoice on the birthday of their parents and offer them their best wishes, so let us rejoice to-day on the birthday of our holy Mother the Church, and return thanks to God that hitherto he has governed and pre-

served her so wonderfully, praying to him to protect her for the future and develop her power and glory more and more.

2. At the time the Holy Ghost descended, "They were all together in one place." This place was the *Cœnaculum* at Jerusalem, to which the Apostles and the other believers repaired after the Ascension of our Lord (*Acts* 1 : 13); and where they, with Christ, had celebrated the Last Supper. This *Cœnaculum* was the holiest and most venerable place upon earth; wherefore the Holy Ghost also made it the theatre of the wonderful dispensation of his graces. The believers, one hundred and twenty, all told, who were assembled there, constituted the Church of Christ; hence St. Augustine says that in the *Cœnaculum* at Jerusalem the whole Church was assembled and received the Holy Ghost.

Now, if the believers assembled in the *Cœnaculum* at Jerusalem constituted the Church of Christ, and the Holy Ghost was diffused on them only, it follows that the Holy Ghost, and with him the grace of the true faith, of justification and sanctification, can be received only in the Catholic Church, which alone is the Church of Christ. Hence St. Augustine says: "The Holy Ghost is only in the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the Catholic Church. Outside this divine body the Holy Ghost enlivens no one."

Part II.

The sending of the Holy Ghost is described by St. Luke thus: *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them.*

1. The sound, as of a mighty wind, was not the Holy Ghost, himself, but only a symbol of his operation. The wind is swift; in a few minutes it makes its way into distant places. Thus the Holy Ghost caused the Christian faith to spread over the earth with wonderful rapidity. In less than three hundred years half of the globe had embraced the standard of the cross, "We Christians," writes Tertullian to the Pagans, "are only of yesterday, and yet we fill all your cities, your castles, your towns, your fields, the palace, the senate and the bench; we leave you nothing but your temples." A storm manifests great power, it ploughs through the sea to its lowest dephts, unroofs houses and roots up whole forests. This is a picture of the wonderful power with which the Holy Ghost worked in the Church and overcame all difficulties in the propagation of the faith. Jews and Pagans

resisted its propagation; the Apostles were persecuted; they were cast into prison; they were scourged and put to death. The Roman emperors left nothing undone to extirpate the Church of Christ. What had the Christians to endure during the persecutions which lasted for three hundred years? how many millions obtained the palm of martyrdom? But all the exertions of the enemies of Christianity were in vain; not only was the Church not destroyed, but she expanded in the midst of the most cruel persecutions; the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

2. The sound came suddenly. Hereby it is signified that the Holy Ghost imparts his graces from pure liberality, and frequently in a moment changes the worldly-minded into pious, religious people, as is proved by the sudden conversions of many worldlings and sinners. "Oh, what a Master the Holy Ghost is! he needs no time for anything he wishes to teach; as soon as he touches a soul, he teaches; to touch, and to teach, are one and the same thing, for as soon as he enlightens the human heart he changes its desires, he removes at once what was, and gives what was not."—*St. Gregory the Great.*

3. *The sound filled the whole house where they were sitting.* These words refer to the riches of the graces which the Holy Ghost dispenses in the Church. We have in abundance everything we need for our salvation, the word of God, the holy sacrifice, the holy sacraments, indulgences, the intercessions and merits of the saints, the sacramentals and the prayers of the Church, in a word, graces upon graces, which render it easy for us to attain our eternal destiny. Let us be thankful to God for these graces, and employ them for our salvation.

4. *The parted tongues refer to the variety of the graces which are given to the faithful through the Holy Ghost,* according to the words of the Apostles: "To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another, faith in the same Spirit; to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will."—*I. Cor.* 12: 8-11.

5. *The sitting of the tongues signifies the abiding of the Holy Ghost with the Apostles and in the Church,* as Christ himself says: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16. What a comfort

for us that the Holy Ghost, as the Teacher of truth, the Dispenser of graces, and our Protector, abides with the Church for ever.

6. Finally, these tongues appeared to be, as it were, of fire. Fire like air, is an appropriate symbol of God, on account of its almost bodiless nature. In the Old Law, God frequently manifested himself by fire; to Moses by the burning bush, and to the Israelites in the desert by a pillar of fire. But the Holy Ghost chose at his descent on the day of Pentecost the symbol of fire, because the Old Law upon Mount Sinai had been given amidst thunder and lightning, for the reality was to correspond to the type. The Holy Ghost, however, did not give the New Law amidst thunder and lightning, but simply in fire, because it is not, like the Old Law, a law of fear, but of love. For this reason the Apostle says: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)".—*Rom.* 8: 15.

PART III.

The effects of the graces accompanying the mission of the Holy Ghost—

1. *As regards the Apostles and the other believers assembled with them.*

(*a.*) *They were all,* as St. Luke says, *filled with the Holy Ghost.* The Apostles had already received the Holy Ghost at their baptism and when Christ gave them the power of forgiving sins, but the plenitude of the Holy Ghost had been reserved for them until that day. To-day, then, they received, besides the increase of sanctifying grace, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord.—*Is.* 11: 2.

(*b.*) They received especially the gift of languages; for "they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."—*Acts* 2: 4. As long as men remained faithful to God, they all spoke but one tongue; but when they tore themselves from him and fell into error and vice, this unity of language was lost. This occurred at the building of the tower of Babel.—*Gen.* 11: 1-9. The Holy Ghost, indeed, permitted the divers tongues, like the other consequences of sin, to exist, but enabled the people, although speaking them, to understand what the Apostles said to them. By this he indicated that all men are called to become *one* through faith and charity, which, as one language, unite all men into one family. Very appropri-

ately St. Augustine remarks on this: "At Babel, Satan, the spirit of pride and the father of discord, divided the one and original language of mankind. In the *Cœnaculum* by the miracle of Pentecost the Holy Ghost restored the unity of language. The reason why the Apostles spoke the languages of all nations is because language is the social bond of the human race. That oneness of language was the expression of the social unity of all the children of God, scattered among the different nations of the earth. And as in the first days of the Church he who spoke all languages was known as one who had received the Holy Ghost, so it is known to-day that he who speaks with heart and mouth the language of the Church, which is spread among all nations, has received the Holy Ghost."

2. *As regards those who were witnesses of the wonderful apparition.* At Pentecost, as well as at Easter, pious Israelites came from all countries throughout which they had been dispersed since the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, to Jerusalem, to adore God in the temple and to offer sacrifices. Many of them remained ever after in Jerusalem, for they deemed it a great grace to be able to die near the temple. We need not wonder therefore at what St. Luke says: *There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men of every nation under heaven.* According to the Evangelist's account, there were present at Jerusalem on the feast of Pentecost men from the three great families of mankind. Of Sem's children there were the Elamites, Mesopotamians, Lydians, Arabians; the descendants of Cham were represented by the Egyptians, Cyreneans, Colchians, Chanaanites and Phœnicians; while the sons of Japheth were represented by the Romans, Greeks, Parthians, Medes, Cretes, Pamphilians, Cappadocians and Phrygians.

Now when these people that were assembled heard the Apostles speaking the language of their respective countries, they were amazed, and wondered, for they were witnesses of a palpable miracle, and said: *Are not all these that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born?*" At the conclusion of the sermon of St. Peter, who explained to them the nature of the miracle and for the first time preached to them Christ crucified, three thousand were converted and baptized. These three thousand souls are the first fruit that the Holy Ghost ripened; the Church will soon have a great harvest, and the words of the Lord will come to pass: "And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his

ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."—*Is.* 2: 2, 3.

PERORATION.

We have now considered when and where the mission of the Holy Ghost took place and what effects it produced. The feast of Pentecost being the birthday of the holy Catholic Church, you should thank God for the great, unmerited grace he bestowed upon you by making you a member of this Church from your infancy. Show yourselves as good Catholics, be zealous for the honor and the faith of your holy Mother the Church, and beware of giving assent to those who vilify her or scoff at her ordinances and doctrines. Show your Catholic faith by your good Christian, Catholic conduct, keeping your conscience undefiled; make use of the means of salvation, prayer and the sacraments, that you may gain strength to overcome the enemies of your salvation and persevere to the end in the grace of God. Amen.

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

FIRE, A SYMBOL OF THE EFFECTS OF THE GRACES OF THE HOLY GHOST.

There appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them.—Acts 2: 3.

We celebrate to-day the feast of Pentecost, on which the Holy Ghost, in the form of fiery tongues, came down upon the Apostles and the other believers. Why did the Holy Ghost choose the form of fire? There certainly is a mystery contained in it, for whatever God does has its reason and significance. St. Luke did not in vain record the fact that on the feast of Pentecost there suddenly came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and that there appeared parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and that it sat upon each of them.—*Acts* 2: 2, 3. Fire symbolizes the effects which the Holy Ghost produced in the first believers on the day of Pentecost, and which he still produces

in the hearts of Christians. The effects of grace, symbolized by fire, shall be the subject of our meditation to-day. Fire has three effects—

I. It illumines;
II. It cleanses;
III. It warms.

PART I.

1. The first effect of fire is, *that it gives light.* If we light a candle in a place that is pitch dark, all becomes bright at once. If fire breaks out on a dark night, it diffuses such a brightness that it can be seen for several miles. The brighter the light and the greater the fire, the more luminous becomes the place that was dark before, and the greater the circle of light. That wonderful luminary, the sun, illuminates the whole earth, and gives light even to the moon and many other planets, to dispel the darkness of the night.

2. Herein fire is a symbol of the Holy Ghost; for it is he that banishes darkness, ignorance and error, from the heart, and enlightens men, that they may clearly apprehend the truths and doctrines of divine revelation.

(*a.*) We perceive this in the Apostles. Our Lord was three years with them, instructing them all the while in the truths of religion; he took great pains to remove their sensual ideas of the kingdom of God, their prejudices and errors, and to make them comprehend the purpose of his mission. But how slightly did he succeed! They resembled ignorant children, who, if you explain to them a truth a dozen times, do not understand it; most of his doctrines were to them obscure, others they did not understand at all. Hence they deserved to be rebuked by Christ for their indocility, and even after his resurrection he said to them: "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken."—*Luke* 24: 25. But how changed they were after they had received the Holy Ghost. Our Lord had told them that the Holy Ghost would teach them all truth; how truly was this promise fulfilled! Then they understood all things whatever Christ taught them; then they remembered all his words; and all doubt, all ignorance, vanished. Then their minds were illumined, not by long studies and researches, but by the Holy Ghost who enlightened and taught them. They who had never learned the art of eloquence, who never before had spoken in public, spoke and wrote like the learned; they were never at a loss for words; they were prepared to reply to every

one. They did not speak in corners, but were seen at Rome, Athens, Corinth; in the most populous and renowned cities they spoke before the high and the low, the learned and unlearned, Jews and Gentiles, and what they said is the essence of wisdom, such as the world had never heard before. So wonderfully did the Holy Ghost enlighten the Apostles!

(*b.*) As the light of the Holy Ghost was necessary to the Apostles, so it is necessary to all men, if they are to come to the knowledge of the truth. Though they may have understanding and be scientifically educated, there is darkness in their soul in all things concerning everlasting salvation, if they be not enlightened by the Holy Ghost. Even the best religious instruction and the cleverest books, are unable without the light of the Holy Ghost to convince them of the truths of the faith and to move them to embrace it. Hence we see that great and learned men who devote much time and labor to the study of the Catholic Church and her doctrine are not converted, but persevere in their errors; they are destitute of the blessed light of the Holy Ghost because they do not humbly pray for it. Again, there are many Christians who deem that to be right and lawful which is openly contrary to the law of God; for instance, that impurity is only a human weakness, which God does not grievously condemn; that certain tricks and frauds in business are permissible; that lies and even false oaths are no sin, if thereby one can avert injury or damage from one's self or others. Whence these pernicious and culpable errors? Because such Christians lack the light of the Holy Ghost. And why is it wanting to them? Because they purposely shut their eyes to it and are deluded by the spirit of the world. The grace of the Holy Ghost being absolutely necessary for acquiring the knowledge of all that is needed for salvation, we must be most anxious to obtain it. What means must we employ for this end? We must listen to the word of God, read spiritual books, and pray devoutly.

Part II.

1. Another effect of fire is, *that it purifies.* Rust is consumed and all corroded iron is purified by fire. The precious metals can be purified only by fire; fire is the means by which the dross and extraneous matter are removed. Hence the adage: "Gold is tried in the furnace."

2. The operations of the Holy Ghost are similar to fire. He purifies the hearts of men from the rust of sins; he consumes and burns in them all inordinate desire for the things of this world, purifying them by raising up their hearts to things above.

(*a.*) The Apostles here furnish us with a proof in point. Before the Holy Ghost came down upon them they had various defects and faults, and our Lord was frequently under the necessity of reproving them severely. They were ambitious and aspired to precedence and distinction; wherefore our Lord placed a child in their midst and said: "Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 18: 3. They possessed as yet but little meekness, were easily excited, and gave room to feelings of revenge."—*Luke* 9: 52-56. Peter sinned grievously for he denied his Lord and Master. The Apostles were imperfect, full of faults, before they had received the Holy Ghost. But how differently they behaved after the Holy Ghost had come down upon them! They became full of humility, full of meekness, of compassion and love; they disdained and despised all earthly things and ardently aspired to heavenly things; in short, they were men of heroic virtue, perfect saints.

(*b.*) As upon the Apostles, so upon us the Holy Ghost must also operate like a devouring and purifying fire, that we may be cleansed from our sins, and from worldly-minded men be changed into heavenly-minded ones. If the Holy Ghost does not aid us, we cannot make an act of supernatural, perfect contrition, which is an indispensable condition for the cleansing of our conscience and our reconciliation with God. If the Holy Ghost does not come into our heart with his sanctifying grace, we are neither justified nor sanctified, but are and remain sinners and objects of his displeasure. By nature we are afflicted with inclinations to pride, avarice, impurity, anger, envy, slander and detraction, and these, if not bridled and subdued, lead to many sins. Can we bridle these evil inclinations by our own strength? No, for we are not "sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3 - 5. If the Holy Ghost does not assist us, we become the sport of our evil inclinations and passions, and fall into grievous sins. The thoughts and affections of most men are fixed upon the goods of this world; how to have a pleasant time and gratify their desires is their principal care; about the service of God and the salvation of their soul they are unconcerned. Who is it that can change this perverse mind of men? Again the Holy Ghost, who, coming with his grace into the hearts of men, totally transforms and renews them, so that they exclaim with St. Paul: "Furthermore I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."—*Phil.* 3: 8.

Part III.

1. A third effect of fire is, *that it warms*. Whatever you bring in contact with fire, though it be icy cold, will soon become warm, even hot, if otherwise it is not combustible, so that, like a stove in a room, it diffuses heat round about. If you put a piece of iron into the fire, it soon becomes red hot, and so partakes of the qualities of the fire that it seems itself to be only fire, and when struck with a hammer it will send off red-hot particles.

2. The fire of the Holy Ghost has the same effect. It warms the frozen hearts of men and inflames them with holy love, which fears nothing but sin, which courageously surmounts all obstacles in the way of salvation, which cannot be deterred by threats or persecution from what it knows to be its duty, and which is ready to make any and every sacrifice, even that of life, for God's sake.

(*a.*) The Apostles again furnish proof of this truth. How weak, how timid and hesitating, they were before they had received the Holy Ghost! When Christ was in the hands of his enemies they all fled; Peter denied him, and swore that he knew him not. After his death, their fear increased still more; they dared not appear in public. They locked themselves up in Jerusalem, for they were afraid of being arrested and condemned to death. But how different was their conduct on and after Pentecost! Now they are no longer the weak, timid disciples; they exhibit a courage which shrinks from no obstacle, despises all threats, all dangers, all tribulations, a courage which enables them to go cheerfully and joyfully to martyrdom and death. Peter appears in public on the day of Pentecost and in Jerusalem, the city which had committed deicide, and preaches Christ crucified with such power and eloquence that three thousand Jews are converted to the Christian faith. All the Apostles now begin their painful, thorny career and preach the gospel; they go into all the world, bid defiance to all dangers and persecutions, and, full of invincible courage, exclaim with St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?"

(*b.*) Wonderful were the effects which the Holy Ghost produced in the Apostles, and he will produce such in us if we allow our hearts to be inflamed and warmed by the fire of his love. In the cold winter time all nature is benumbed, the earth is desolate and incapable of producing a blade of grass. The fruit trees are

shorn of their luxuriant foliage and have no power to blossom or bear fruit. But, lo, the sun comes again and warms the earth with his rays. What a change! All nature awakens from its death-like slumber and begins a new life; all the plants and trees bud, bloom, grow, and bring forth fruit. So it is with us, according as we are with or without the Holy Ghost. Without him we are spiritually dead, we cannot do the least thing in the business of our salvation. As the body without the soul is dead and can do nothing, so the soul without the vital force, without the Divine Spirit, is dead as regards the kingdom of heaven; it can accomplish nothing that relates to God. As soon as the Holy Ghost comes down upon us with his divine fire we receive life, warmth and strength. Inflamed by the fire of his love, we overcome all temptations, keep God's commandments, fulfil the duties of religion and our state of life, and practise the Christian virtues; in a word, we do everything that is necessary and useful for the salvation of our souls. Very truly and beautifully St. Chrysostom says: "Through the Holy Ghost we have obtained the forgiveness of our sins; through him we have been cleansed from the stains of vice; through his gifts men who gave themselves up to his guidance have become angels, not by changing their nature, but, what is still more wonderful, by remaining men and walking as purely and holily as the angels themselves. By the grace of the Holy Ghost man, who a little while before was defiled by the rust of sin, becomes brighter than the sun."

PERORATION.

Such are the great and wonderful effects produced by the Holy Ghost. Just as fire diffuses light round about and banishes darkness, so the Holy Ghost enlightens us so that we may know what is good and pleasing to God. As fire frees iron and other metals from dross and makes them bright, so the Holy Ghost cleanses us from the stains of sin and makes us glorious images of God. And as fire warms whatever comes within its reach, so the Holy Ghost warms the hearts of men by his love, that they may obtain strength to surmount all obstacles to salvation and practise every virtue. Oh, let us shun sin, walk in humility, fervently practise the Christian virtues, and pray with attention, fervor and devotion, that the Holy Ghost may abide with us and bless us, both for time and eternity. Amen.

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST FOR THE SALVATION OF MAN.

But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.—John 14: 26.

The holy feast of Pentecost, which we celebrate to-day as the third principal festival of the Ecclesiastical Year, is dedicated to the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to "the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who together with the Father and the Son is equally adored and glorified."—*Symb. Nic.* Unspeakably great and varied are the graces which we owe to the Holy Ghost, for they relate to all things necessary for our purification and salvation. The Church recalls these to our mind to-day, and exhorts us to meditate on them and make the resolution from henceforth to employ them for our salvation with all possible fervor. In order to obey the invitation of the Church, we will make the operation of the Holy Ghost for the salvation of man the subject of our meditation, answering the three following questions:

I. What part has the Holy Ghost taken in the work of our Redemption?
II. What did he do on the feast of Pentecost?
III. What will he continue to do until the end of the world?

PART I.

What part has the Holy Ghost taken in the work of our Redemption?

1. *He foretold the Redemption of man.* Immediately after the fall of our first parents, he announced the coming of a Redeemer, in these words: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—*Gen.* 3: 15. He foretold the Redeemer through the Patriarch Jacob: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations."—*Gen.* 49: 10. Through Isaias: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son; and his name shall be called Emmanuel."—7: 14.

Through Micheas: AND THOU, BETHLEHEM EPHRATA, art a little one among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."—5: 2. By these and many other prophecies the Holy Ghost caused the belief in the coming Redeemer and the longing after him to be again and again awakened and preserved.

2. *He prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary for the dignity of the divine Maternity.* It is an article of the faith that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin, for it was not becoming that she who was to bring forth the Holy of Holies, the Son of God and the Conqueror of Satan, should ever be defiled with sin and be the slave of Satan even for a moment. Mary was free not only from original sin, but also from every personal sin, even from the least fault; she possessed in the first moment of her conception a greater measure of sanctity than all angels and saints; she also practised in her life all virtues and attained in each of them the highest perfection. To whom does Mary owe all these prerogatives and graces? To the Holy Ghost, who applied to the treasures of his grace in order to render her worthy of becoming the Mother of God.

3. *He effected the Incarnation of Christ.* This wonderful mystery of our holy faith is expressed in the Sacred Scripture in clear and plain words. Thus the Archangel Gabriel says to the Blessed Virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy Ghost which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—*Luke* 1: 35. In like manner the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, the virginal spouse of Mary: "Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."—*Matt.* 1: 20. We say in the Apostles' creed: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," and this truth is brought before us in the first "Joyful Mystery" of the Rosary. By the power of the Holy Ghost, therefore, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assumed human nature, that is, a human body and a human soul, and united it with his Divinity in one person, the Person of the Son of God. Now, since according to the decree of God Christ was to become man, in order to be able to suffer and die for us and thereby to redeem us, we owe our delivery from sin and eternal damnation also to the Holy Ghost, because it was he that accomplished the Incarnation of Christ and thereby enabled him to redeem us.

4. *Lastly, he assisted with his grace our divine Lord in everything that he, as man, has done for our Redemption.* When Christ was

baptized by St. John in the river Jordan, the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and came upon him to impart to him the plenitude of his graces.—*Matt.* 3: 16. He was led by the Spirit into the desert, before he began his public life, where he fasted forty days and forty nights and overcame the temptations of Satan.—*Matt.* 4: 1, *et seq.* Again, it was the Holy Ghost who, as Jesus himself assures us, anointed and sent him, "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward."—*Luke* 4: 18, 19. Urged and strengthened by the Holy Ghost, Christ offered himself to God as a clean oblation, dying for us on the cross.

From all this we perceive what part the Holy Ghost took in the work of our Redemption, and how much reason we have, in consideration of all that Christ has done for our Redemption, to think also of the Holy Ghost and to thank him for his gracious co-operation.

PART II.

What did the Holy Ghost do on the feast of Pentecost?

1. He came in the shape of parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and sat upon the Apostles and other believers, and they received the plenitude of his graces, especially the gift of tongues. On this day the Apostles received not only the plenitude of sanctifying grace, but also the gifts which they needed in the exercise of their high calling. It was the Holy Ghost who taught the Apostles all truth (*John* 16: 13), and enabled them to preach the divine doctrine to the world in its entirety, pure and unadulterated; it was he who stripped the hearts of the Apostles of all weakness and human fear, and fortified them with courage and strength, that braving all obstacles and dangers, all difficulties and persecutions, they preached the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and joyfully sacrificed their lives. It was he who changed them into new beings and filled their hearts with the most pure love of God and with indomitable zeal, so that they lived only for Christ and for their holy vocation; hence they could say with St. Paul: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."—*Gal.* 2: 19, 20. Moreover, the Holy Ghost imparted to the Apostles the gift of tongues, to enable them, in preaching the gospel, to make themselves understood by all the nations of the earth, which spoke many languages. He also imparted to them other miraculous gifts, such as power to cast out devils, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, as proofs of their divine mission. Thus it was reserved to the Holy

Ghost to render the apostles efficient preachers of the faith and dispensers of graces; without him they would not have been able to convert and gain a single soul, much less the whole world.

2. The Holy Ghost did still more on Pentecost. *He introduced the Church of Christ into the world.* Christ had already founded his Church, and the congregation assembled in the *Cœnaculum* at Jerusalem constituted it. But it was hidden, it was small, insignificant, for there were only one hundred and twenty souls, all told; they had space enough in a room. Moreover, Peter and the other Apostles did not yet possess those gifts which they needed for the profitable exercise of their office; they lacked especially the gift of wisdom and fortitude, to enable them to appear in public as preachers of the gospel; finally, the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, of comfort, of fortitude and sanctification, was wanting to the whole Church; it resembled a body without a soul, therefore a body without life, without motion or activity. But what a blessed change is wrought in the Church to-day! The Holy Ghost comes not only upon the Apostles but also upon all the believers assembled in the *Cœnaculum*, therefore upon the whole Church, and makes his permanent abode with her. The promise of Christ is accomplished: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John* 14: 16. To-day the Holy Ghost imparts to Peter and the other Apostles those gifts which they need to rule the Church and to ordain whatever is required for the salvation of mankind; to-day the Holy Ghost manifests the existence of the Church to the world, for at the conclusion of St. Peter's first sermon three thousand Jews are converted to the Christian faith and become members of the Church. Pentecost therefore is a very important, blessed day; it is, as it were, the birthday of the Holy Catholic Church because on this day the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles and the believers and because he introduced her to-day into the world. Thanks be to the Holy Ghost for this wonderful grace now and for ever!

PART III.

What will the Holy Ghost continue to do until the end of the world?

1. *He preserves, guides and rules the Church until the consummation of the world.* Christ, indeed, is the invisible head of the Church, and, as such, rules her in an invisible manner, but only through the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from him and the Father, and is sent by him, and who, consequently, is his Spirit. St. Augustine says: "What the soul is to the body of man, the Holy

Ghost is to the body of Christ, to the holy Church, for the Holy Ghost does in the Church what the soul does in the single members of the body—he enlivens, guides and rules her". The Holy Ghost introduces the officers of the Church by consecration into their office and imparts to them the necessary graces and faculties for the administration of it. Therefore St. Paul exhorts the officers of the Church at Ephesus: "To take heed to themselves and to all the flock wherein the Holy Ghost has placed them bishops." The Holy Ghost continually assists the teaching Church, so that in matters of faith and morals she cannot err, and everything she ordains and decrees is according to the will of God. Therefore, the Apostles assembled in council at Jerusalem declare: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things."—*Acts* 15: 28. Because the Holy Ghost rules the Church, her officers, although frail men and sometimes leading disedifying lives, never make laws and ordinances which are in contradiction to the doctrine of Christ. There is not even a single instance in which the Pope has decreed or prescribed anything contrary to faith or morals and laid it down as an obligation upon the faithful. Whenever an error was broached it was rejected. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, has never allowed at any time an error to creep into the sacred deposit of faith and morals, and never will. Finally, when we consider the Church in the light of history, and see her not only existing in the midst of countless persecutions from century to century, but spreading more and more among the nations of the earth, we must confess that it is the Holy Ghost that rules and protects her, and guards her against all her exterior and interior enemies.

2. *He sanctifies us.* Jesus Christ is our Redeemer; he has expiated our guilt and reconciled us with God. We owe it to his infinite merits that we are purified and sanctified. But, although Christ has merited for us the grace of sanctification, we are not yet, on that account, really sanctified. This grace must be applied to us. What profit to a thirsty man is a well which is closed up in the bowels of the earth, or to which he has not the strength to approach and drink of its water? He will die of thirst, no matter how pure and abundant the water may be. In like manner the merits of Christ profit us nothing, if there is no one to make them accessible to us, because by our own strength we cannot apply them to ourselves. In order to become partakers of the merits of Christ, we must believe, hope, love, repent of our sins, and truly amend our lives; but we cannot do these things by our natural strength. Now the Holy Ghost comes to our rescue; he awakens in us the desire for the grace of conversion, he supports us, that we may comply with all the conditions necessary for the application of the fruits of Redemption; and

lastly he imparts to us these fruits themselves by really purifying and sanctifying us. Hence the Apostle writes: "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God," whose purifying and sanctifying grace Christ has merited for you by his passion and death on the cross.—*I. Cor.* 6: 11.

The Holy Ghost effects our sanctification by the sacraments. In baptism he cleanses us from original sin, and also from all actual sin, he sanctifies us and makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. For this reason the Apostle calls baptism "the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost."—*Titus* 3: 5. In the Sacrament of Confirmation the Holy Ghost completes in us the baptismal grace, and makes us soldiers of Christ. He not only increases in us sanctifying grace but also enlightens us with his divine light, that we may discern the illusion of the world and the dangers to our salvation which threaten us; he fortifies us with supernatural strength that we may overcome all temptations and persevere in the state of grace. If we be so unfortunate as to lose the grace of God by mortal sin and to render ourselves guilty of eternal damnation, we have the Sacrament of Penance in which we obtain the remission of our sins and of the eternal punishment due to them. This grace again we owe to the Holy Ghost, for to him belongs the work of our sanctification not only in baptism, but also in penance; and priests forgive sins only in virtue of the Holy Ghost; wherefore Christ said to his Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." In the same manner the Holy Ghost operates in the other sacraments; it is always he that applies to us the merits of Christ for our purification and sanctification.

PERORATION.

From what has been said, it is evident how beneficent the Holy Ghost is, how charitably he is to us and how many and great graces he bestows upon us. He begins his holy and salutary work immediately after the fall of our first parents, inaugurates the work of our Redemption and is continually active till he has completed it. Scarcely has our Redeemer left the earth when the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven, imparts to the Apostles all the gifts and graces which they need for the discharge of their office, and introduces the Church into the world. He makes his permanent abode in the Church, protects, preserves, rules and guides her until the consummation of the world, and sanctifies in her and through her all men of all times. Oh, let us think to-day with a grateful heart of all these graces of the Holy

Ghost and resolve to employ them with persevering fervor for our salvation! In conclusion, let us pray with the Church: O God, thou who on this day didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his consolation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-SUNDAY.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.—*John* 14: 26.

This is the glorious, blessed day on which this promise of Christ was fulfilled. *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* The Holy Ghost is the fountain of all that is good; to him we owe not only some, but all graces. The Sacred Scripture, however, out of the countless multitude of gifts of grace, enumerates especially seven. Speaking of Christ, the incarnate Son of God, Isaias (11: 2, 3) says: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: *the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness.* And he shall be filled with the *spirit of the fear of the Lord.*" I shall briefly explain to you to-day these seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, in order to move you to adore, praise, and glorify the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son.

I. The gift of wisdom.

1. True wisdom is a gift of the Holy Ghost, which enlightens our understanding, that we may know our destiny, and urges us to aspire after that which makes us truly happy. He who possesses true wisdom knows that mortal sin is the greatest, nay, the only evil, and, therefore, is resolved to lose everything, even life, rather

than wilfully commit a mortal sin; he has no attachment to the goods of this world, for he is penetrated by the conviction that "everything under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit." He lives and acts indeed in the world, he attends to his business, he acquires money and lands and occasionally enjoys some harmless, innocent amusement, but he has no inordinate love for these things, he considers temporal goods only as a means for obtaining salvation. He says with the Apostle: "The time is short; it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as of they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not, and they that buy, as though they possessed not, and they that use the world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away."—*I. Cor.* 7: 29-32.

2. Example: The Emperor Theodosius asked the holy virgin Olympias to marry his cousin; but, as she was firmly resolved to live only for her heavenly Bridegroom, she refused this request. The Emperor became so exasperated that he sequestrated her immense property till she attained the age of thirty; she was then only eighteen. Olympias wrote to the Emperor: "You have done me a great favor, which is worthy not only of an emperor, but of a bishop; for by taking care of my property you have freed me from many cares and all disquietude in regard to its proper administration. To make my joy complete, order my property to be distributed to the churches and to the poor. I have for a long time feared the motions of vanity, which necessarily arise in the distribution of charity and to which I should easily be exposed were I to distribute it myself. Temporal riches might also cause me to neglect the spiritual and divine ones. I will aspire after true Christian wisdom, loving no longer the world and its goods, henceforth seeking only God and the everlasting goods."

3. That you may obtain this precious gift of the Holy Ghost, you must pray for it according to the word of St. James: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly."—*James* 1: 5. Meditate frequently on your last end, and consider how fleeting and perishable are all earthly things, and that nothing can console and rejoice you in eternity but a pious, Christian life. Read spiritual books; they will make a salutary impression upon you and you will learn that only one thing is necessary—to love God and thereby to be saved, and thus to come into the possession of heavenly wisdom.

II. The gift of understanding.

1. This gift consists in a special illumination of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are enabled to look deeply into the mysteries of

faith and to understand them better than the wise and learned of the world. Christians who are endowed with the gift of understanding often possess a wonderful knowledge of divine things; they have a profound comprehension of the truths of religion, and know how to give the most surprising solutions to questions which human wisdom cannot answer. This sublime knowledge is not acquired by study, but is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Hence the Apostle writes: "The things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God."—*I. Cor.* 2: 11, 12.

2. Examples: The Apostles. They were not highly educated men; they do not seem to have been endowed with any extraordinary genius or talent; they were dull of apprehension, and much of what Christ said to them they understood not at all. But after the Holy Ghost had come upon them and imparted to them the gift of understanding, the whole doctrine of Christ became perfectly plain to them; they understood the Sacred Scriptures and exhibited a knowledge in matters of religion which confounded all the knowledge of the Jews and Gentiles. The venerable Gregory Lopez, born at Madrid, in the year 1542, knew the whole Bible by heart and so thoroughly understood its contents that he could interpret the most difficult passages with such lucidity that his interpretation seemed to all who heard it the only true one. Many theologians visited him and all went away full of wonder and amazement, and many of them, after having heard him, changed the opinions to which they had long been wedded. Dominic Salazar, afterwards archbishop, said once to his three companions after visiting him: "How is this, that we, who have devoted our whole life to study, do not know as much as this simple man?"

3. The Holy Ghost generally gives this gift of understanding only to souls who excel in humble faith and purity of heart; wherefore our Lord glorifies his heavenly Father, because he concealed the mysteries of religion from the wise and the prudent, and revealed them to little ones.—*Matt.* 11: 25. If you are humble of heart and live piously, if you love to pray, and to hear the word of God, the Holy Ghost will impart to you the gift of understanding, as far as it is necessary and expedient for you.

III. The gift of counsel.

1. This gift consists in this, that being enlightened by the Holy Ghost we know in doubtful cases what is good, expedient and

pleasing to God, and what means we must adopt to attain the end. It frequently happens that we are harassed by doubts; we cannot decide whether by doing or not doing something we shall be adopting the right course and acting according to the will of God. That in such cases self-love or the appearance of good may not deceive us, or that the evil spirit, who sometimes changes himself into an angel of light, may not impose upon us, the Holy Ghost comes to our assistance with the gift of counsel. We know then from the reasons which the Holy Ghost presents to our mind, or by a firm, calm conviction, what we ought to do in order to act according to the will of God. He who possesses the gift of counsel can also give advice to those who in their doubts apply to them for it.

2. Examples: The holy hermit Anthony gave wise counsel to thousands who came to consult him about the affair of their salvation. Even the Emperor Constantine and his sons applied to him by letter and received from him excellent admonitions and counsel. St. Bernard was importuned for counsel in the solitude of his monastery at Clairvaux by ambassadors from all parts of the Christian world, and gave it to princes, bishops and popes, who adopted his decisions as final. In truth, his decisions were surprising, and clearly showed that he drew them from the heavenly fountain.

3. If you are in doubt in any affair, but especially with regard to your choice of a state of life, humbly and confidently ask light of the Holy Ghost. He will either himself suggest to you what you ought to do, or he will send you some one who will show you the right road. The words of Christ are also applicable here: "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke* 11: 9.

IV. The gift of fortitude.

1. This gift consists in an extraordinary strength of will, whereby we are enabled in every situation of life to carry out that which is pleasing to God and necessary or expedient for our salvation. This fortitude manifests itself particularly—

(*a.*) *In temptations*, which are frequently very violent, and resemble storms which root up the strongest trees. It is the Holy Ghost that comes to our help and gives us strength to overcome the enemies of salvation. Examples: The chaste Susanna: Joseph of Egypt. Both underwent great temptation; both were placed in circumstances in which they must either sin or lose their honor or liberty, or perhaps their life. Both resisted the temptation and preferred to die rather than commit a foul deed. It was the

Holy Ghost, whom they implored in their necessity, that imparted to them the necessary strength.

(*b.*) *In sufferings*, which frequently become so heavy that the Christian needs extraordinary strength of mind to enable him to bear them patiently. This fortitude shone forth particularly in the holy martyrs. Their executioners tried every means to make them renounce their faith; they threatened them with the most cruel tortures; they cast the servants of God into dismal dungeons and delivered them up to the most painful death, but nothing was able to shake their fortitude and firmness of faith; these Christians lived and died for Christ. Other saints also exhibited wonderful fortitude in sufferings. Thus St. Teresa, who, during a sickness of forty years, which frequently caused her intolerable pain, used to say in prayer: "Lord, either to suffer, or to die."

(*c.*) *In cases where God demands of us great sacrifices.* Example: St. Francis Xavier, as he himself says, at first trembled with fear when he was ordered to preach the faith to the cannibals of the island of Morea. But the Holy Ghost strengthened him with the gift of fortitude; he courageously went, and by his preaching and example transformed the bloodthirsty savages into lambs of Christ.

2. *The Holy Ghost will also give you the gift of fortitude*, if you pray for it with fervor. Have recourse to him, then, *in temptations, in sufferings, in misfortunes*, and in all *situations* in which great sacrifices are required of you, and pray to him with confidence that he may strengthen your weakness and assist you in doing the holy will of God. Your prayer will certainly be heard if you have a good will and do what is required on your part.

V. The gift of knowledge.

1. Knowledge is the gift of the Holy Ghost by which we are initiated into the mysteries of religion and at the same time enabled to initiate others into them. This knowledge is justly called a gift of the Holy Ghost, because no one can obtain it of himself. By study, reading and instruction we may acquire a profound acquaintance with religion, but to penetrate deeper into the knowledge of revealed truth and obtain a clear idea of it is impossible for us. In like manner it is not in our power to explain to others the truths of religion, so as to convince them and induce them to embrace them with a believing heart. In a double relation we need the gift of knowledge; the Holy Ghost must instruct us and give us the gift of instructing others with profit.

Hence we read in Proverbs (2: 6): "The Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth cometh prudence and knowledge."

2. Examples: The holy Fathers and doctors of the Church, SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Thomas of Aquin, Bernard, and others. Their writings are mines of Christian truths; they illustrate and support all the docrines of our holy religion, and enable every one who cares for truth to distinguish it from error and to acquire a profound knowledge of religion. St. Vincent Ferrer traveled not only through all the provinces of his own country, Spain, but also through France, Italy, England, Scotland and Ireland, preaching the word of God everywhere. When he arrived at any place, princes, bishops and clergy flocked to meet him, and frequently eighty thousand persons listened to his discourses. Prodigious was the effect of his sermons; the number of loose women, murderers, robbers, usurers and blasphemers who were converted is estimated at forty thousand. In Spain alone he converted twenty-five thousand Jews and eight thousand Saracens. Such great things did this Saint accomplish by the gift of knowledge which the Holy Ghost had imparted to him.

3. Let us return thanks to the Holy Ghost for having from time to time illumined some in this wonderful manner, and let us make use of this gift of knowledge by meditating seriously and deeply on the eternal truths of salvation.

VI. The gift of godliness or piety.

1. He who possesses this gift, is not only careful not to offend God by sin, but he also loves him as his heavenly Father; he loves all that God loves, the angels and saints, and especially the Blessed Virgin, and all his fellow-men as children and images of God. He finds his greatest pleasure and sweetest joy in prayer, in reading spiritual books, in hearing the word of God and in the reception of the sacraments; in short, he loves everything that relates to the honor and glory of God. Among all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, there is scarcely one that produces such glorious and beautiful fruits as piety; it looks upon everything with the eyes of love, and adheres to God in evil as well as in good days with unchangeable fidelity. To the practice of piety St. Paul exhorts us in these words: "Exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable to little, but godliness in profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." —*I. Tim.* 4: 7, 8.

2. Example: St. Rose of Lima. She had already in her twelfth year attained a high degree of piety. When sewing, knitting,

speaking with others, or however occupied she kept herself in the presence of God. At prayer she seemed dead to the outside world. She was often seen kneeling for hours together, and praying in an immovable posture in a corner not far from the high altar. At the same time, she was active in the works of charity, practising obedience conscientiously, fulfilling the duties of her state with all fervor and leading a very mortified life. The nearer the time of her dissolution approached, the greater became her desire of being united with her divine spouse. Having received the holy sacraments and thrice pronounced with devotion the holy name of Jesus, she expired on the 24th day of August, 1617, in the thirty-first year of her age. Pope Clement X. canonized her in the year 1671.

3. Strive to acquire piety, for it is necessary for salvation. Love solitude and lead, as far as you can, a retired life. Set a guard on your senses, mortify all inordinate inclinations, turn your hearts frequently to God, make acts of charity, receive the holy sacraments as often as possible or as may be recommended by your confessor; visit Jesus in the tabernacle, examine your conscience daily, and diligently practise mental and vocal prayer.

VII. The gift of the fear of the Lord.

1. We distinguish a twofold fear, a servile and a filial fear. If we avoid evil like a slave only from fear of punishment, we have the servile fear of God; but if we shun evil like a good son from fear of offending our loving father, we have the filial fear of God. Servile fear is good and is also a gift of God.—*Conc. Trid. Sess.* 14: *Cap.* 4. This kind of fear urged the Ninivites to do penance. But filial fear is far nobler and better, and in so far as it impels us to avoid even the least sin, it is, in the proper sense of the word, the seventh gift of the Holy Ghost. This is indeed the filial fear of the Lord, which is peculiar to noble-hearted children everywhere, for they always fear to do anything that might displease their loving Father in heaven.

2. Example: God once showed Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, while in ecstasy, all her faults and imperfections. She burst out into loud complaints and tears, and said: "O my God, I would gladly go to hell if thereby I could bring it about that I had not offended thee." And yet she had never committed a mortal sin, and even venial sins she shunned with the greatest care. She had so great a horror of sin that it seemed to her impossible that a Christian could offend God with premeditation. A fortnight before her death she said to her sisters: "I now go out of this

life, and it seems to me incomprehensible that a creature can offend his Creator and Father knowingly and wilfully by mortal sin."

3. Oh, that this filial fear might animate us all, and that we would shun and detest sin above all things! Oh, that parents would admonish their children again and again to fear God! Truly, if they would conscientiously follow this one admonition, they would shun every sin and adhere faithfully to God in all the vicissitudes of life; for, "they that fear the Lord will seek after the things that are well pleasing to him."—*Ecclus.* 2: 19.

PERORATION.

These are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: "Be zealous for the better gifts."—*I. Cor.* 12: 31. Pray with fervor, perseverance and confidence, for prayer is the key to the heart of God and draws down upon us every good and perfect gift. Be humble of heart, knowing that God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble. Lead a retired life, for the Holy Ghost does not give his graces in the tumult of the world, but in solitude: "I will lead her into solitude, and there I will speak to her heart." Preserve always a good conscience, because the Holy Ghost dwells in a pure heart and there bestows his graces. If you follow these rules, you will receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost as far as necessary and expedient for you, and with their help work out your salvation. Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Epistle. *Rom.* 11: 33-36. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

St. Paul, in the lesson of this day, expresses his admiration of the infinite wisdom of God, who knows how to turn all things into good; he marvels at the incomprehensible judgment of God, that is, at the purposes and intentions according to which God ordains and directs everything; how, for instance, he receives and rescues some from ruin; how, on the contrary, he withdraws his grace from others and leaves them to perdition. Lastly, he admires the ways of God, that is, the means which he employs to carry out his purposes and particularly to rescue unbelievers and sinners. Then he invites us to praise and to glorify God on account of his infinite wisdom, love and mercy.

The Church gives another explanation to this epistle and applies it to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity which we celebrate to-day. In this sense I also propose it for our meditation, and shall speak of—

I. The incomprehensibility of the Most Holy Trinity;
II. The works of the Most Holy Trinity;
III. The honor due to the Most Holy Trinity.

Part I.

O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments and how unsearch-

able his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made him? The Church applies these words of the Apostles to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, for God is incomprehensible—

1. *In his essence.*

To comprehend God in his essence, or to be able to say what he is, is beyond the power of men and angels. His attributes are known and comprehended by himself alone, adequately praised by none but by the eternal word, and perfectly loved only by the divine Spirit. Hence the Apostle says: "The things that are of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God."—*I. Cor.* 2: 11. St. Augustine says: "God is inexpressible; we can more easily say what he is not, than what he is." Hiero, the ruler of Syracuse, once asked the philosopher Simonides what God was. The philosopher asked to be allowed one day for consideration. The next day he appeared before the king and asked for two days more, and at the expiration of the two days asked for four days more, prolonging the time in regular geometrical progression. Full of astonishment, Hiero asked him what this delay meant. Simonides replied: "The more I think of what God is, the more obscure the subject becomes to me."

Let us take only a few of the divine perfections or attributes of God, to convince ourselves how incomprehensible he is. *God is eternal.* There never was a time in which he was not. Time began with the creation, and although the word *before* presupposes time, yet we must say that God existed before time commenced. We can go back in time to the first moment of creation when time commenced, but if we go back millions of years we always find God, and we cannot find a moment of time in which he was not. Who can comprehend this, since we can think of nothing at all that has not had a beginning at some time or other? *God is everywhere, omnipresent.* He is at one and the same time in heaven and upon earth and in every place; he is everywhere whole and entire, one and the same God, without multiplying himself; simple, without extension. Who can comprehend this? *God is infinitely just and merciful,* and yet he treats men very differently. Manasses, king of Juda, adds sin to sin and commits all possible cruelties and abominations for about fifty years, and finally finds grace before God (*IV. Kings* 21: 1, *et seq.; II. Paralip.* 33: 12 *et seq.*); and his son, after two years spent in dissipation, is killed and lost for ever.—*IV. Kings,* 21: 19. Who can comprehend this entirely different treatment of father and son, and reconcile it with the eternal justice of God?

2. *In his three Persons.* Faith teaches us that there are three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that each of these three Persons is truly God. Now, if the Father is truly God, the Son truly God, and the Holy Ghost truly God, and the three Persons really distinct, as they are, what should we infer from this? Evidently that there are three Gods. But it is not so; there is, as you all know, but one God. Who can comprehend this? Faith teaches us that the Son is a self-existing Person, who is begotten of the Father, is wholly in the Father and according to his nature one with him; and that the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, is a self-existing Person, is wholly in the Father and the Son, and with them constitutes only one God. Who can comprehend this? Again, faith teaches us that both the Son and the Holy Ghost, who have their origin from the Father, are, and must be from eternity, the same as the Father, because otherwise they would not be God. We cannot comprehend this, since reason tells us that the Father must be prior to the Son; the cause must precede the effect.

Whether we consider God in his essence or in his three Persons, we meet unsearchable mysteries, and must exclaim with the Apostle: *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!* But God has not revealed to us his existence, his Unity of essence, his Trinity of Persons, and his other attributes, that we may comprehend him, but that we may believe and adore him.

Part II.

The words of St. Paul in the epistle of this day: *For of him and by him, and in him, are all things,* may be referred to the works of the Most Holy Trinity.

1. *Of him are all things.* These words refer to the first Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Father.

(*a.*) *All things are of God and the Father,* even the uncreated, the divine, viz., God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Son is begotten of the Father. "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."—*Ps.* 2: 7. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. "When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, *who proceedeth from the Father,* he shall give testimony of me." What a deep and all-embracing meaning have the words of the Apostle: *Of him are all things,* since not only temporal and finite things, but

also what is eternal and infinite, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, have their origin from God the Father.

(*b.*) *All created things are of the Father.* The immense firmament with the sun, moon and beautiful stars, most of which are so enormous that the earth we inhabit, compared with them, appears only as a ball, is his work. Our earth, with its thousand millions of men, who in about thirty years die and make room for other thousand millions, and with countless animate and inanimate creatures in the three kingdoms of nature, is also his work. Heaven and the angels, those glorious creatures whose number is indefinite, are his work. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

(*c.*) *The second creation, our Redemption, is also of God the Father.* For although he did not become man and die on the cross, yet he decreed to send his Son into the world for the Redemption of sinful man. Hence Jesus himself says: "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."—*John* 3: 16. O how great, how powerful, how good and merciful must God the Father appear to us, when we consider the words of the Apostle: *Of him are all things.*

2. *By him are all things.* These words refer to the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

(*a.*) God the Father is not the Creator exclusively; God the Son and God the Holy Ghost took part in the work of the creation. All three Persons being but one God they possess the same power, the same wisdom and goodness, the same will, and, consequently, the three Persons work eternally together. To the Father is especially ascribed the creation of heaven and earth, because a power is required for that which properly belongs to the Father, the eternal First Cause, from which the Son and the Holy Ghost originate. That the Son also co-operated in the work of creation, St. John tells us in plain words, in his gospel: "All things were made by him (by the Word, the Son of God); and without him was made nothing that was made."—*John* 1: 3. God the Son co-operated in the work of creation in a manner peculiar to his Person. As God the Father brought forth all creatures by the power which is attributed to him as the first Person of the Blessed Trinty, so God the Son ordered and directed all things in the creation by the wisdom which is proper to him from his personal knowledge of the Father, so that the wisdom of God shines forth from all created things.

(*b.*) To God the Son we owe, in particular, our second creation, or Redemption, for it is he, as the Nicene Creed says: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." For our sake he lived thirty-three years upon earth, in suffering and lowliness and after unspeakable sufferings shed his precious blood on the cross. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them who were under the law."—*Gal.* 4: 4, 5. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—*I. Peter* 1: 18, 19. What gratitude do we not owe to God the Son for the grace of Redemption! Let us never forget what our Redemption has cost him; let us live penitently, that its fruits may be applied to us.

3. *In him are all things.* These words refer to the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

(*a.*) The creation is also the work of the Holy Ghost. The words of the Sacred Scripture indicate this: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved over the waters."—*Gen.* 1: 1, 2. In the first stage of creation everything was formless. The four elements were mixed up in one conglomerated mass; there was neither beauty nor order anywhere; it was the Holy Ghost that brought beauty and order out of the primitive chaos, separating the elements from one another, and thus forming them into those individual creatures—earth, air, fire, and water. Because the Holy Ghost is the personal and reciprocal love between the Father and the Son he manifested especially his love in the work of creation, as the Father his omnipotence and the Son his wisdom, having the welfare of creatures before him and desiring that all creatures, especially angels and men, should rejoice at their existence.

(*b.*) Our second creation, or Redemption, is a work of the Holy Ghost also. For it is he who effected the Incarnation of Christ. The Archangel Gabriel said to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God."—*Luke* 1: 35. Moreover, it is the Holy Ghost who applies to us the fruits of Redemption, for he assists with his grace, by which we are enabled to comply with the condition to which the fruits of Redemption are at-

tached; he purifies and sanctifies us in the sacraments and makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. Without the Holy Ghost the merits of Christ would be to us but a locked-up fountain; it is he who makes this fountain of grace accessible to us. Be thankful to him for his graces and avail yourselves of them for your salvation.

PART III.

1. *To him be glory for ever. Amen.* With these words the Apostle expresses that glory is due to the Triune God.

(*a.*) *Honor and glory are due to the Father.* In the fourth commandment we are commanded to honor our father and mother. We have the same duty towards God the Father. He is our Father because he has created us and given us a body and soul. But he is still more our Father because through Jesus Christ we have become his children, wherefore the Apostle says: "You are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus."—*Gal.* 3: 26. Our Father in heaven stands infinitely higher than all earthly fathers, for though they may rule over great nations, they are only weak, mortal men, but God is almighty and eternal. Add to this that we receive from God infinitely more benefits than any child does from its earthly father. To God, our heavenly Father, we owe all that we have, and all that we are, for time and eternity. If children are bound to honor their father and mother, how much more are not we obliged to honor God, our Father in heaven? God requires of us to honor him: "The son honoreth the Father, and the servant his master; if then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?"—*Malach.* 1: 6.

(*b.*) But how must we show that we honor God, our heavenly Father? Principally by doing his holy will in all things, like good children. A father feels himself honored by the good conduct and prompt obedience of his children. In like manner we honor God most by the conscientious fulfilling of his holy will. Sin being particularly against the will of God, be careful to avoid it. Be fervent in the practice of prayer, fulfil the duties of your religion and state of life and perform the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; for by these works you will become conformable to God, who is pure mercy and love, and gain his approbation. In all your daily occupations have the glory of God in view, and do everything for the love of God, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31.

2. *Honor and glory are due to God the Son.*

(*a.*) He, as well as the Father, is God and claims the same honor. This he does, saying: "The Father . . hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father."—*John* 5: 22, 23. And not only as God, but also as man, Jesus Christ deserves divine honour and adoration because his humanity is hypostatically united with his Divinity in the Divine Person of the Son of God. Hence the Apostle says of him: "God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." —*Phil.* 2: 9, 10. And if we consider the ineffable goodness of Jesus Christ in becoming man, suffering and dying on the ignominious gibbet of the cross for us, how could we refuse him our veneration and heart-felt gratitude?

(*b.*) Here is the practical question: How must we honor Christ? By taking him for our pattern and following him, as he says himself: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."—*John* 13: 15. He calls the love of God and our neighbor his principal commandment, and he practised this commandment in the most perfect manner, declaring that it was his meat to do the will of his Father, and being obedient to him even to the death of the cross, doing good to all men and giving his life for them. Let us follow him: let us manifest our love of God by doing in all things his holy will, and the love of our neighbor, by being kind and benevolent to all men, wishing them well, and performing acts of kinduess and charity on their behalf. He cries out to us: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Let us imitate him. Let us be meek and suppress the passion of anger; never let anger break out into curses and blasphemies; let us be patient with the frailties of our fellow-men and forgive our enemies; let us be humble; let us give no room to vain, self-complacent thoughts; let us never seek worldly honor and praise; let us not exalt ourselves above others; and let us be patient when we meet with humiliation. Christ was obedient to the death of the cross. Let us practise obedience, deny our self-will, and subject ourselves to our superiors in all things which are not contrary to the will of God. Christ exhorts us to prayer, and gives us the most beautiful example, spending whole nights in watching and praying. Let us also be fond of prayer; let no day pass without saying our morning and evening prayers; let us attend the public worship of God and love to visit Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar; let us love and venerate the Blessed Virgin, and in the midst of the affairs of life let us acquire the habit of di-

recting our thoughts frequently to God, and of making a good intention. In a word, let us endeavor in our whole conduct to become more and more conformable to our divine Lord, for this is to him the most acceptable honor we can show him.

3. *Honor and glory are due to the Holy Ghost.*

(*a.*) Faith teaches us that the Holy Ghost is God, who, together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified. Therefore we must honor him as we honor the Father and the Son. The Church wills that we honor him; for this reason she annually celebrates a particular feast in his honor, Pentecost, and attributes to him the same honor as to the Father and the Son in the doxology, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost must also be honored by us on account of his love for us, and the benefits he bestows upon us. All the graces which we need for our sanctification and salvation come from him. He enlightens us that we may know what is good and pleasing to God, and what we must do and avoid: he encourages us to do good; he strengthens us to overcome all temptations and to serve God faithfully. He also purifies and sanctifies us in the sacraments, and it is by his assistance that we are enabled to perform meritorious works, make progress in virtue, and persevere to the end in justice. Who would not honor the Holy Ghost, this good Spirit, and Dispenser of all graces?

(*b.*) But how must we honor him? Principally by making good use of his graces. The Holy Ghost gives us many salutary admonitions by the voice of conscience, the instructions of the pastors of souls and other well-meaning people, and by the various events and occurrences of life. Let us avail ourselves of these admonitions, let us avoid our faults, give up our bad habits and be fervent in the practice of every virtue. The Holy Ghost sanctifies us in the sacraments. Let us be zealous in their reception and go to confession and communion as often as possible, that we may be purified, sanctified, and fortified. The Holy Ghost is not content with giving us his graces, he also comes to us and makes his permanent abode in our hearts, as the Apostle plainly says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—*I. Cor.* 3: 16. Shun every sin with the greatest care, and give no room to bad thoughts in your hearts, so that the Holy Ghost may never withdraw from you his blessed and gracious presence.

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you how you must honor the three Persons in the Blessed Trinity, to whom we owe our creation, re-

demption and sanctification. Honor God the Father by being always his good children, by doing cheerfully and willingly what pleases him, and by detesting and shunning everything that is displeasing to him. Honor God the Son by imitating his example in your conduct; "for whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son."—*Rom.* 8: 29. It is only when the image of Christ is distinctly stamped in us, that we may hope to belong to the number of the elect. Honor the Holy Ghost, listen to his inspirations, employ his grace for your sanctification, preserve a pure conscience, that he may always dwell in you. Honor the Triune God, that you may be found worthy to adore, praise and glorify him with the angels and saints for ever in heaven. Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

GOSPEL. *Matt.* 28: 18-20. At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

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2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

COMMISSIONS AND PROMISES WHICH CHRIST GAVE TO HIS APOSTLES.

The words which I have just read to you are the conclusion of the gospel of St. Matthew. Jesus spoke these words to his Apostles after his Resurrection, probably on Mount Olivet, shortly before his Ascension into heaven. They are certainly very remarkable, for they are among the last that he spoke upon earth, and in them he gave his Apostles commissions and promised them his perpetual assistance. The Church reads this gospel for us to-day, the feast of the Blessed Trinity, because in it there is mention made of the three divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. It contains three principal points, which for our instruction and edification we will consider together this morning.

I. Christ speaks of his power;
II. He gives the Apostles a threefold office;
III. He promises them his permanent assistance.

PART I.

All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.

1. Let us first consider *the meaning of these words.*

(*a.*) Christ says: *All power is given to me.* This refers not only to his divinity, but also to his humanity. That as God he possesses all power is evident; for as God he is almighty and nothing is impossible with him. It is just as certain that all power belongs to him as man. His humanity is not separated from his Divinity, but united with it in one person; as God-man he is only one divine Person, and therefore as man he possesses all power that belongs to God. This is also the reason why we show divine honor to the humanity of Christ and adore it, for as St. Athanasius says: "We do not adore a creature, but the incarnate Lord of the creation, the Divine Word, because we do not consider his humanity separated from his divine Person, but united with it."

(*b.*) *All power is given to me.* Christ says this especially with regard to his merits, because as Son of man he acquired all power by his life, sufferings, and death, and it was given him as the price for his obedience unto death. Hence the Apostle says of him: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth."—*Phil.* 2: 8-10. By the work of our Redemption Christ became also our Lord and Master, and sits as Mediator and Judge on the right hand of the Father, who "hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of Man."—*John* 5: 27.

(*c.*) *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* The power of the God-man, Christ, embraces the whole creation, the material, and spiritual world.—*Ephes.* 1: 20-23; *Coloss.* 1: 16-19. *In heaven* he has all power, sending, together with the Father, the Holy Ghost, preparing mansions there for his faithful disciples, taking the just to himself, and making them participate in his everlasting felicity. *On earth* he has all power, because all nations are subject to him, because his Church continues to exist in spite of all her visible and invisible enemies, and is spread more and

more, and because everything depends on him, and is directed and governed by him. Again, he has all power on earth because he directs the hearts of men according to his will, changes and re news, rewards and punishes all, as they may deserve.

2. *What ought we to learn from this?*

(*a.*) First of all, *to subject ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ and to render him the most perfect obedience.* If subjects owe obedience to their rulers, and servants to their masters, how could we be disobedient to our Saviour, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth and who is our Lord and Master? Let us therefore do his holy will and make his word and example the rule of our life. Let us endeavor to practise the virtues which he practised, the love of God and of our neighbor, his humility and meekness, his patience and submission to the will of God. Let us not forget that we must manifest our love for him by doing what he commands: "He that hath my commandments, and keepth them, he it is that loveth me."—*John* 14: 21.

(*b.*) *To imitate Christ:* "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 24. Christ acquired the power which he possesses as man in heaven and on earth, and all his exaltation and glory, by his self-denial, sufferings and death on the cross. Therefore he says himself: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?"—*Luke* 24: 26. If we wish to share his power and glory, it must be done by mortification of the flesh and by self-denial. He who leads a worldly life upon earth and serves the lusts of the flesh can not expect to attain heaven; he will share the lot of Dives burning in the fire of hell and asking for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Let us, therefore, "bear about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."—*II. Cor.* 4: 10. Let us daily practise interior and exterior mortifications, that we may not fall into sin. The more we mortify ourselves, the more secure will be our salvation and the more glorious our future reward.

(*c.*) *Finally, in every situation of life to preserve confidence in Christ.* No calamity, no necessity or distress, no misfortune can be imagined in which he, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, could not help us. If we be sorely tempted, let us not lose courage but let us, like the Apostles, full of confidence and fervor, cry out to Jesus: "Lord, save us, we perish," and he will come and give rest to our souls. He exclaims to us: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh

you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. As long as we live upon earth our salvation is in danger, everywhere enemies lie in wait for us, and if even saints fell, how much more easily may we fall, who are so weak and frail? But let us not give way to despondency; Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, is powerful enough to protect us in all dangers. If we only have a good will, if we watch and pray, we may confidently say with the Apostles: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* 4: 13.

PART II.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

1. With these words Christ our Lord gave the Apostles a threefold commission—

(*a.*) *The commission to teach*, when he said: *Going, therefore, teach ye all nations.* These words are plain; the Apostles were to preach to all nations the divine doctrine taught by Christ so that all men, Jews and Gentiles, might come to the knowledge of truth and salvation. In order to enable the Apostles to discharge the duties of this office, Christ assured them of his permanent assistance, and sent them the Holy Ghost to teach them all truth, and to preserve them from error. Consequently the Apostles had the right and the duty everywhere to preach the doctrine of Christ, to condemn errors, and to give a final decision in religious controversies. The Apostles fulfilled this important office with all zeal, and ceased not to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles until their death.

(*b.*) *The commission to baptize*, when he said: *Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.* The priesthood is given the power of forgiving men their sins and reconciling them with God; the Sacrament of Baptism being the first means of grace, by which men are cleansed from all sin, sanctified, and make children of God and heirs of heaven, the administration thereof is one of the essential duties appertaining to the priestly office, and consequently Christ gave the Apostles authority to administer it when he conferred upon them the power of administering the other sacraments and of offering the holy sacrifice. The Apostles exercised the office of the priesthood, for they baptized all that believed in Christ, administered by prayer and the imposition of hands the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders; they offered, by "breaking bread" (*Acts*

2: 46), the holy sacrifice of the mass, and administered, as Scripture and Tradition inform us, all the means of grace as appointed for the priesthood.

2. *The commission to govern*, when he said: *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* The Apostles were not only to teach, but to insist upon the observance of that which they taught. They were to be spiritual shepherds, and therefore received from Christ the power to rule the faithful, to make laws for them, to punish those who would make themselves guilty of great crimes; in short, to ordain whatever they thought necessary and salutary for their salvation. That they exercised this office is evident from their epistles and from the Acts of the Apostles. They always acted as superiors of the Christian congregations, made laws and ordinances, for instance, at the Council of Jerusalem, when they declared the ceremonial law of the Jews abolished (*Acts* 15); they also exercised the power of punishing; for example, St. Paul excommunicated sinners at Corinth.—*I. Cor.* 5: 3-5. This threefold office, which Christ vested in the Apostles, *passed from them by their delegated authority to their successors, the bishops of the Catholic Church.* This is evident—

(*a.*) *From the Sacred Scripture*, which tells us that the Apostles everywhere appointed bishops, who in their stead were to perform these sacred offices. Thus St. Paul made Titus bishop of Crete, and Timothy bishop of Ephesus, and gave them rules and regulations as to how they should administer their office. He writes thus to Timothy: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine."—*II. Tim.* 4: 2. St. Peter exhorts the bishops and priests, "to feed the flock of God, taking care thereof not by constraint, but willingly, according to God."—*I. Pet.* 5: 2. These and many other passages prove that the bishops took the place of the Apostles and were appointed and consecrated by them. They were to preach and to exercise vigilance so that error might not creep in; and wherever it should be necessary they were to appoint other bishops and priests; they were to feed the flock and to ordain everything required for the welfare of the Church.

(*b.*) *From Tradition.* St. Clement, of Rome, says: "The Apostles appointed the bishops their successors and ordained, as the rule of succession, that when they died other tried men should receive their office." St. Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostle St. John, in his epistles frequently speaks of the bishops, and calls them the successors of the Apostles, and exhorts the faithful to respect them as our Lord himself, because they are his representatives. St. Irenæus emphatically says that the bishops are

the successors of the Apostles: "The bishops and their successors in the Church down to our day have been appointed by the Apostles." By these bishops, however, only those are to be understood who are in union with the Pope; for Christ gave Peter to the Church for her head, and although he also made the other Apostles pastors, it was his will that they should be subordinate to Peter, the chief Pastor. Now what applies to the Apostles, applies to their successors, the bishops; they must, acknowledge the Pope as their head and remain always united with him. If a bishop be not confirmed by the Pope, or if a bishop separate himself from the Pope and refuse him obedience, the faithful under his charge can not acknowledge him as their lawful bishop, nor can they obey him.

PART III.

And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

1. In these words our Lord promises the Apostles his permanent assistance. They had a responsible office, attended by many sufferings and persecutions, an office which imposed duties upon them which far surpassed human strength and which could be fulfilled only by the special assistance of God. They were to preach the word of God in its entirety; they were to enkindle the light of faith everywhere, to root up the vices and passions of men and to renew the face of the earth. What a task for the Apostles? If they had not been endowed with angelic powers, they never could have accomplished it. Christ was well aware of this, and for that reason he assured them of his permanent assistance, saying: *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* As if he would say: Your office imposes a heavy burden upon you, but have confidence; I am with you by *my wisdom*, enlightening you, that you may always preach my holy doctrine in its purity, and that you may confound all the wisdom of the world; I am with you by *my power*, protecting and strengthening you, that you my brave all persecutions and may come forth victorious from every battle. I am with you all days, always, without interruption, and there shall not be a moment in which you cannot count and depend upon my help.

In view of this promise of our Lord, the Apostles, full of courage and confidence in God, commenced their labors. Considering themselves infallible teachers of truth, they condemned all doctrines in contradiction with theirs as errors; they insisted that all were bound to believe what they taught. They said with St. Paul: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be ana-

thema."—*Gal.* 1: 8. They required that all should "look upon them as ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God," they established wherever they found faith Christian congregations, appointed and consecrated bishops, and made ordinances which they considered either necessary or expedient.

2. Jesus Christ, having established his Church for all time, his assistance must extend itself not only to the Apostles but also to their successors, since they could not by their own power exercise the office of teaching and that of the priesthood, conformably to the will of God and for the salvation of mankind. That the successors of the Apostles enjoy the divine assistance is evident from the words of Christ: "*Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.*" As the Apostles died after a few years, these words of Christ can have no other meaning than that he would abide with their successors and assist his Church to the end of the world. From this naturally follow two truths as important as they are consoling to us Catholics:

(*a.*) Since the Church enjoys the assistance of Christ to the end of the world, she is and will be the pillar and ground of truth to the end of the world. Her mouth is the mouth of Christ, and what she proposes to our faith is divine truth, and we are under a strict obligation to subject ourselves in perfect obedience to all things concerning our salvation. To all those who resist her authority and do not believe what she teaches, or do what she presribes, the words of the Lord apply: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."—*Matt.* 18: 17. You must reflect well on this, and be good, obedient children of the Church.

(*b.*) As the Church enjoys Christ's assistance to the end of the world she cannot perish. Though the enemies of our faith attack her and employ all possible artifice and force, they will not prevail against her. The Church that has already existed more than eighteen hundred years under the guidance and assistance of her divine Founder, and has overcome the combined assaults of wicked men and all the demons of hell, will still exist in undimmed splendor long after her present enemies and persecutors have returned into dust; she will exist so long as Christ, according to his promise, is with her—to the consummation of the world.

PERORATION.

Therefore be not afraid and let not your heart be troubled when you see the Church everywhere oppressed and persecuted. Jesus, her divine Founder, permits her to be oppressed and per-

secuted; she is his bride, and must bear her lot with him; but he is also her protector and defender, and suffers her not to perish. Let us cling to her as good children to their mother; let us fight with her the holy fight against unbelief ard impiety, let us suffer with her in patience and confidence in God, and let us pray with her and for her, that Christ may console and strengthen her, and soon bring peace to her, for the glory of his name and the salvation of the world. Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

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3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

Venerable Bede was one of the most fervent worshippers of the Blessed Trinity. Both day and night he frequently repeated these words: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." By this pious devotion he obtained great graces. God imparted to him an extraordinary hnowledge of the truths of religion and at the same time kept him in profound humility; he taught him to despise the world, human praise and applause, and strengthened him in every temptation to enable him to gain the victory over all the enemies of his salvation. His last utterance was: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," after which he calmly fell asleep in our Lord. We also must with profound veneration adore, praise and glorify the Blessed Trinity. The Church requires this of us; for which reason she not only celebrates annually a proper feast in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, but also dedicates all the Sundays of the year to this adorable mystery. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity shall be the subject of our pious meditation to-day. We will consider—

I. Wherein this mystery consists;
II. How important the knowledge of it is for us.

PART I.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity consists in this:—

1. *That there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

(*a.*) A plurality of Persons in the Deity is already mentioned in the Old Law. Thus God says: "Let *us* make man to *our* image and likeness."—*Gen.* 1: 26. Again: "Behold, Adam is become as *one of us.*"—*Gen.* 3: 22. Here God speaks in the plural number, indicating that in him there are more persons than one. In the second psalm the difference between the Father and the Son is plainly set forth, for there we read: "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."—*Ps.* 2: 7. In another psalm we read: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were established: and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth."—*Ps.* 32: 6. According to the Fathers there is mention made here of the three divine Persons. By "the Lord" we understand God the Father, by "the word" God the Son, and by "the spirit of his mouth "God the Holy Ghost". From these and others passages it is evident that God in the Old Law gave intimations of three Persons in the Godhead.

(*b.*) That there are three Persons in the Godhead, Christ clearly revealed. During his three years' teaching he very often spoke of God his Father, and of himself, the Son, who is one with the Father, and whom we should honor as we do the Father; and of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and whom he would send. In the gospel of this day, in which he commands his Apostles to teach and to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we plainly perceive that there are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. At the baptism of Jesus the three divine Persons manifested themselves in a visible and audible manner; for the voice of the Father was heard from heaven. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" the Son was baptized and the Holy Ghost came down in the form of a dove and rested on him.—*Matt.* 3: 16. The Apostles also teach that there are three Persons in the Godhead. I will mention for the sake of brevity only one passage. St. Paul says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all."—*II. Cor.* 13: 13.

2. *That each of the three Persons is truly God.*

(*a.*) *The Father is God.* No heretic has ever dared to deny this. As of the three Persons one at least is God, it must necessarily be the Father, because he is the origin of both the others. Moreover, works, divine perfections, and the name of God are so emphatically attributed to him in both the Old and the New Testaments, that to deny the Godhead would be to reject all revelation.

(*b.*) *The Son is God.* St. John, in the beginning of his gospel, calls him God, and attributes to him eternity and the creation of the world, saying; "In the beginning (that is, from eternity) was the Word (the Son of God), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . All things were made by him."—*John* 1: 1, 3. Jesus says of himself: "I and the Father are one" (*John* 10: 30), whereby he evidently declares that he is of one essence with the Father, and, consequently, as truly God as the Father.

(*c.*) *The Holy Ghost is God.* We have an incontrovertible proof of this truth in the words of Peter to Ananias: "Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost . . . Thou hast not lied to men, but to God."—*Acts* 5: 3, 4. Divine perfections and works are attributed also to the Holy Ghost in the Sacred Scriptures, such as omniscience, the inspiration of the Prophets and Apostles, the government of the Church and the sanctification of men. Each of the three Persons, then, is truly God, and each of them possesses all divine perfections and qualities: they are in their essence perfectly equal to one another.

3. *That all three Persons are one God only.*

(*a.*) The unity of God is laid down in the Sacred Scriptures so distinctly and strikingly that it seems useless to quote passages to prove it. Jesus Christ plainly declares in the gospel of this day that the three Persons in the Godhead are one God only. He does not say: Baptize "in the *names*." If he had said "in the names," we should infer that the three Persons were three Gods. He says "in the name," whereby he gives us to understand that in one God there are three Persons, or that the three Persons, of whom each is God, are only one God. St. John also expresses this mystery very directly and distinctly when he says: "There are three who give testimony in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."—*I. John* 5: 7.

(*b.*) The three Persons in the Godhead, moreover, are only one God *because they have only one nature and essence.* By nature and essence we understand that of which a thing or person consists. Thus body and soul constitute the nature of man, because man

consists of body and soul. We men have all the *same* nature, that is, each one of us has a body and soul, but we have not all *one nature*, that is, all men have not together *one body and one soul*, but each one has for himself a body and a soul; from which it follows that we are not one man, but many individual men. As many bodies and souls as there are united with each other, so many individuals are there. But it is otherwise with the three divine Persons; they have together but one nature or Godhead, therefore *all three are only one God.* Divines and the Fathers of the Church make use of various figures and similitudes in order to illustrate this mystery. Imagine before you three persons, Peter, Paul, and John, who have altogether three bodies, but only one soul. Here we might say: Peter is a man, Paul is a man, and John is a man, because, as is supposed, the one soul would be in each body. But we could not say, Peter, Paul, and John are three men, for, to be three men, they should have three souls, each having one for himself, whilst they have but one in common together. So it is with the Blessed Trinity; each of the three Persons is truly God, because each has the divine nature, but they are not three Gods, but only one God, because together they have not three Godheads, but only one. But this, as all other figures used for the illustration of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, is insufficient and inedaquate. Nothing is left for us but humbly to believe this mystery, and we can do this so much the easier, the more our faith is grounded on the infallible word of God.

4. *That the three Persons do not differ from one another in their essence, but only in their person.*

The three Persons differ from one another, not by confusion of their essence or substance—each of them having one and the same Godhead—but by distinction of person. The Person of the Father is not that of the Son, and not that of the Holy Ghost. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are, therefore, not merely three different names or ways of the manifestation of the one Godhead but three Persons really distinct from one another. In what does this distinction consist? In this that the Father is of himself, not made, not created, not begotten; that the Son is of the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten; and that the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. The Father is *of himself*, from eternity, and herein he differs from the Son and the Holy Ghost, who have their origin, not *of themselves*, but *of the Father.* "The Father hath life in himself."—*John* 5: 26. The Son is begotten of the Father from eternity, and herein he differs from the Father, who is of himself, and from the Holy Ghost who is not begotten but proceeds. The Lord hath saith to me: "Thou

art my son, this day have I begotten thee."—*Ps.* 2: 7. Finally the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and differs from the Father who is of himself, and from the Son who is begotten.

5. *That particular works are ascribed to each of the three Persons; to the Father the creation, to the Son the redemption, and to the Holy Ghost sanctification.* Of God the Father we read: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (*Gen.* 1: 1); of God the Son: "Christ hath redeemed us" (*Gal.* 3: 13); and of God the Holy Ghost: "You are sanctified in the Spirit of our God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 11. I must remark, however, that the three divine Persons in all external works, the Creation, the Redemption, and Sanctification, work together, and that these works are attributed to them only because they correspond to the peculiarity of each Person. The Creation is principally a work of omnipotence, and therefore it is attributed to the Father, because to him, as the origin of the Son and the Holy Ghost, belongs all power. The Redemption is especially a work of wisdom, and therefore, it is atributed to the Son, because he is the fruit of the knowledge or the wisdom of the Father. Sanctification is particularly a work of love, and is therefore attributed to the Holy Ghost, because he proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and of the Son.

PART II.

The knowledge of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is very important—nay, necessary to us, because on it are founded *Faith, Hope and Charity.*

1. *Faith.*

(*a.*) Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is the Founder of our holy religion. He taught us what we must believe and what we must do in order to please God and save our souls. In order to believe his doctrine without doubting we must be convinced of his divinity, for men can err and lie. It is true, Jesus led a holy life, but holiness of life is not of itself a sufficient reason for perfect credibility, since even the saints may err. Jesus had frequently and solemnly declared himself to be the Son of God. He who, therefore, does not acknowledge him to be God, but affirms that he is only man, must consider him as either an impostor or a lunatic, for no rational, truth-loving man had ever before pretended, or will ever pretend to be God. Now, could Christ, if he were an impostor or a lunatic teach the truth? From this you see how much depends on our believing in the divinity of Christ and in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. If you take away this

faith, the cornerstone of Christianity, the whole superstructure falls in mighty, everlasting ruins to the ground.

(*b.*) The same holds good of the Holy Ghost. Christ promised to send him, and afterwards did send him, to teach the Church all truth and to abide with her for ever.—*John* 14: 16, 17. It is the Holy Ghost upon whom the infallibility of the Church is based. Now how would it be if the Holy Ghost were not God? The Church would not deserve to be believed, because the basis upon which her infallibility rests would be taken away, and she would therefore be liable to err. He who denies the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and refuses divinity to the Son and the Holy Ghost, ceases to be a Christian. How important, then, is the faith in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity!

2. *Hope.*

(*a.*) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is our Redeemer. One only, God himself, could accomplish the work of our redemption, for the guilt of man before God was infinite and demanded an infinite satisfaction, which neither angel nor man, nor any finite or created being, but only God himself, the Infinite Being, could make. If Christ were not truly God, but only man, or some other creature, our redemption would be null and void, and the whole human race would still be groaning in the thraldrom of sin and Satan. If Jesus is not God, all his merits have only a finite value, and the holy sacraments, the sacrifice of the mass, and all the means of salvation are inefficacious. He who denies the divinity of Jesus Christ robs us of all hope and plunges us into despair, for he destroys the work of our Redemption.

(*b.* The Holy Ghost sanctifies us. It is he that applies to us the fruits of Redemption, by enlightening us, by justifying us in the holy sacraments, by transforming us into new men, by making us children of God and heirs of heaven. But whatever the Holy Ghost does for our sanctification presupposes that he is true God. For how could a creature have the power of spiritually transforming us, of making us, who by nature are sinners and slaves of the devil, children of God and heirs of heaven, and of strengthening us so that we may overcome all the enemies of salvation? This evidently is a divine work. Thus he who denies the divinity of the Holy Ghost robs men of all hope, because no creature, no finite being, but God alone, can sanctify us. How important, then, is the belief in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity!

3. *Charity.*

(*a.*) The love of God is the greatest and the first commandment, as Christ expressly declares: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."—*Matt.* 22: 37, 38. If this commandment is not kept all virtues and good works are useless and unprofitable, and no one can be saved. St. Paul says: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2, 3. The same Apostle says: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."—*I. Cor.* 16: 22.

(*b.*) But what is required for a true, salutary love of God? We must be in the state of grace, that is we must possess sanctifying grace, for if we live in the state of sin the love of God is absolutely impossible, since sin is in direct opposition to the love of God and is as incompatible with it as darkness is with light. Therefore St. John says: "If we say that we have fellowship with him (that is, love God), and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."—*I. John* 1: 6. The love of God requires true faith. "Without faith," says the Apostle, "it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. But if one cannot please God neither can one love him, for he who loves God is pleasing to God. "I love them that love me."—*Prov.* 8: 17. Finally, for the love of God a particular supernatural assistance of grace is required: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God."—*II. Cor.* 3: 5. If we cannot of ourselves conceive even a salutary thought, it is evident that we are not capable of loving God without grace from above.

(*c.*) What follows from this? That charity is also based upon the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. If Jesus were not truly God, he could not have redeemed us, consequently we should be still in sin, and incapable of loving God. The same must be said if the Holy Ghost were not truly God; in this supposition he could not sanctify us, and therefore again it would be absolutely impossible for us to love him. If the Son and the Holy Ghost were not truly God, the true faith and love would be wanting to us, since charity is not possible without faith. Finally, if the Son and the Holy Ghost were not truly God, Jesus Christ could not have merited the grace necessary for doing good, and the Holy Ghost could not impart to us this grace; and the consequence again would be that we could not love God because grace is required for the love of God and the practice of everything good and salutary.

PERORATION.

Thus you perceive that the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is very important, nay, absolutely necessary for us; on it is founded our Faith, our Hope, and our Love, and consequently our salvation. Therefore the Church tries in every way to being it before us and to engrave it deeply on our hearts. She begins and ends every prayer in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, by ordaining the use of the sign of the cross before and after it. She administers all the sacraments, blesses us, and imparts to us all graces, in the name of the Blessed Trinity. Awaken your faith in the Blessed Trinity to-day, and every day; adore with profound veneration and give thanks to the adorable Trinity for the benefits of Creation, Redemption and Sanctification; do all things in honor of the Godhead and frequently repeat the doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

TRINITY SUNDAY.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE BLESSING OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

There is no mystery of our holy religion, of which the Church reminds us so frequently as that of the Blessed Trinity. Whenever we make the sign of the cross we name the three divine Persons. Whenever we receive a sacrament we do so in the name of the Blessed Trinity. Whenever the Church dedicates or blesses anything she invariably makes use of the sign of the cross, invoking thereby the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The Pope, bishops and priests never bless the faithful otherwise than in the name of the Trinity. At the end of the mass, the priest blesses the assembled faithful in these words: "May Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost bless you." At the distribution of holy communion out of mass there

is a blessing which is also used in many other sacred actions, and runs thus: "May the blessing of Almighty God, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, come down upon you, and abide with you for ever. Amen." As no topic would, I think, be so appropriate to-day or so fully engage your attention as that of the blessing given in the name of the most holy Trinity, I will endeavor to explain to you its signification and value. Two truths will engage our attention:

I. That there is no blessing but that given in the name of the Blessed Trinity;

II. That this blessing has a wonderful power, if we make ourselves worthy of it.

PART I.

1. In the Old Law benedictions and blessings were frequently given and were highly valued; the mystery of the Holy Trinity not having as yet been revealed in clear terms, we do not find an explicit invocation of it.

(*a.*) *God himself blessed all things that he created* (*Gen.* 1: 28), especially the people, when he said; "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." He also blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work.—*Gen.* 2: 3. He blessed the Patriarchs, especially Abraham, to whom he said: "I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and IN THEE shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."—*Gen.* 12: 2, 3. And thus we read in many passages of the Sacred Scripture that God blessed men. But God can bless only as a triune God, because he really is a triune God; and all external works, such as blessings, belong to the three divine Persons in common. When therefore we read: "God blessed," we must always understand the three Persons, the Father, from whom the blessing proceeded; the Son, who uttered the blessing, and the Holy Ghost, who gave efficacy to it.

(*b.*) *The angels all blessed in the Old Law.* Thus we read in the Book of *Genesis* (chap. 32), that an angel "wrestled with Jacob till morning; and when he saw that he could not overcome him, he said to him: Let me go, for it is break of day." Jacob answered: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he blessed him in the same place." This blessing of the angels was a blessing in the name of the Holy Trinity, for the angels had

the clearest knowledge of this mystery, and moreover were informed that God the Father, according to the plenitude of his mercies, would send his only-begotten Son for the redemption of mankind; that the Son would assume human nature and die on the cross, and that the Holy Ghost would come to apply the merits of Christ to men for their sanctification. Whenever the angels blessed any one, they accordingly turned their face to the three divine Persons and prayed them to give efficacy to their blessing; that is, to make their blessing come to pass.

(*c.*) *Like God and the angels, the Patriarchs also blessed in the name of the Holy Trinity.* The blessing which Noe gave to his sons, Sem and Japhet, Isaac to Jacob, Jacob to his sons, Moses to Josue, and David to the people, was a blessing which had for its foundation the hope of a future Redeemer, the Son of God, and of the sanctification of redeemed mankind through the Holy Ghost, although the patriarchs did not in their blessings expressly call upon the three divine Persons.

(*d.*) In the Old Law the blessing which the priests were to impart to the people was expressly ordained by God, and consisted of a threefold blessing, in which the holy Fathers find the mystery of the Holy Trinity distinctly indicated. God dictated the blessing to Moses in these words: "Say to Aaron and his son: Thus shall you bless the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: *The Lord* bless thee, and keep thee. (God the Father.) *The Lord* show his face to thee, and have mercy on thee. (God the Son.) The Lord turn his countenance to thee, and give thee peace. (God the Holy Ghost.) And they shall invoke my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."—*Numbers* 6: 23-27. Thus every blessing in the Old Law was given mysteriously in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

2. And this is much more the case in the New Law since Jesus has revealed the mystery of the Holy Trinity in clear terms.

(*a.*) We read in the gospel that Jesus blessed persons and things; for instance, he blessed *bread and fishes,* which he miraculously multiplied; *bread and wine,* at the Last Supper, before he changed them into his flesh and blood; *the children,* who were brought to him; *and his disciples,* immediately before his Ascension into heaven. But whenever he blessed he did it in the name of the Holy Trinity; in the name of the Father, of whom he was begotten and by whom he was sent; in his own name, as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world; and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who, by

him and the Father, has been sent into the world for the sanctification of the human race.

(*b.*) After Christ's example the Apostles blessed by the explicit invocation of the three Persons of the Trinity. St. Peter begins his first epistle thus: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ . . according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father* unto the sanctification *of the Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ:* Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied." St. Paul ends his writings to the Corinthians thus: "The grace of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, and the charity of *God*, and the communication of *the Holy Ghost* be with you all."

(*c.*) Whatever the Church dedicates and blesses, she does it in the name of the Holy Trinity. By the power and authority of the Church the bishops and priests dedicate and bless various things, such as churches, cemeteries, altars, bells, candles, vestments, etc.; also persons, such as kings and emperors, religious and the sick: but all these blessings are given in the name of the Holy Trinity by distinctly invoking the three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And pious lay-people, in blessing themselves, or fathers and mothers their children, always make the sign of the cross and say: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Pious Christians are accustomed to bless themselves in the morning and evening with the sign of the cross, with these or similar words: "The Father who created me, the Son who redeemed me, the Holy Ghost who sanctified me, bless me now and for ever more." "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of his sacred passion, the sign of his holy cross." "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, be my protection and help to-day, and every day, and at the hour of my death."

PART II.

The blessing in the name of the Holy Trinity has a wonderful power if we render ourselves worthy of it, or put no obstacle in its way.

1. *It has a wonderful power;* for—

(*a.*) *It removes everything injurious from nature, and protects it from evil influences.* God diffused the plenitude of his blessing upon all creatures, even the inanimate, for all that he created was good. "And he saw all the things that he had made and they were very good." But the sin of our first parents opened the fountain of the curse which flooded the whole earth and

brought misery and ruin upon all nature. The grace of our Redeemer stemmed the torrent of mischief, and reopened the fountain of all heavenly blessings. The Church stands guard at this fountain of salvation to pour it forth, by her prayers and blessings, upon men, upon surroundig nature, upon all creatures. Hence she blesses not only the fruits of the earth, but also the fields and the meadows, the gardens and the vineyards, that rain and sunshine and favorable weather may impart fertility to them. If wet weather or drought prevails, if a heavy storm threatens, in sickness and epidemics, she has recourse to prayers and blessings, in order to obtain the help and protection of God.

Examples of the efficacy of the blessing. St. John and St. Benedict blessed poisoned wine which had been offered them to drink, and which they drank without receiving injury. St. Martin blessed a fire that had broken out, and it was immediately extinguished. St. Vincent Ferrer often drove away violent lightning by his blessing.

(*b.*) *It procures for us corporal and spiritual benefits.* What beneficent effect had not the blessing of the patriarchs upon Sem and Japhet; upon Isaac and Jacob and his son! The Lord was with them in all their ways and for centuries made his blessing effectual even in their descendants. If the blessing of the patriarchs in the Old Law was so salutary, what may we not expect from the blessing of holy Church! If, according to the Holy Ghost, the blessing of the father establishes houses (*Ecclus.* 3: 11), will not the blessing of the Church be of far greater benefit? For not in vain has God appointed her the keeper and dispenser of the immense treasure, "the grace of Jesus Christ;" and not in vain does she dedicate and bless the hands of her priests, that whatever they bless may be blessed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Examples: St. Hilarion blessed the grapes on the vine, of which there were but a few, and immediately the efficacy of the blessing was manifest, for the vines became full of grapes. St. Eligius frequently multiplied wine by his blessing; St. Jordan did the same with bread and St. Severin with oil.

(*c.*) *It protects us from all the assaults of the powers of hell.* The Apostle says: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in high places" (that is, in the air).—*Ephes.* 6: 12. That the devil, who tempted even the Son of God, will not spare us, we know only too well; that he can injure us in temporal things we know from the history of Job and from such persons as have been possessed. But

we have the most powerful means to avert and to render ineffectual these attacks of the devil, and the principal one is the blessing of the Holy Trinity. As Christ drove out devils in his own name and in the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, so he promised and gave his power also to the Apostles; nay, every Christian can keep away and overcome this old enemy by blessing himself with faith and confidence in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Examples: St. Theodore by his simple blessing expelled the devil from a maid-servant who was possessed. St. Columba by his blessing delivered a poor man from a great evil which he had for a long time endured from the devil. The saints were accustoned in every temptation to make the sign of the cross, and to invoke the Most Holy Trinity, and the temptation always vanished without causing any harm.

2. *If we render ourselves worthy of it.*

(*a.*) We must receive it *with confidence.* The blessing according to its nature is a prayer, which, in order to be heard, must be with confidence. "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. But *let him ask in faith, nothing wavering:* for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."—*James* 1: 5-7. We must have the same faith and confidence when receiving a blessing as when praying; we must carry the conviction to our hearts that the triune God will impart to us everything necessary and expedient for us for time and eternity.

(*b.*) *We must receive it with a pure or at least a penitent heart.* To him who lives in sin without the desire of conversion, every blessing is unprofitable. The Pope, a bishop or priest, or even a saint, may bless him, *God does not,* for "the countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things."—*I. Peter* 3: 12. To impenitent sinners is applicable what David says: "He loved cursing, and it shall come upon him: he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him."—*Ps.* 108: 18. God dearly loves the just man and gives efficacy to the blessing which he bestow on him. But even sinners partake of blessing; if they are really penitent and firmly resolve to amend their lives God will show them mercy, and the blessing which they receive will be salutary to them and will obtain for them the grace of true conversion.

(*c.*) *We must have a desire for it.* To obtain the gifts of God, it is required that we have a sincere desire for them. This holds

good of the blessing: only those Christians who fervently desire it partake of it. Such Christians diligently avail themselves of opportunities to receive the blessing. They love to go to mass and other devotions because the blessing is then given by the consecrated hand of the priest. They will also often by day and night sign themselves with the holy sign of the cross, because they know that through that blessing they can obtain the protection of God and many other graces. But there are Christians who care little or nothing about the blessing, who neglect the public devotions, and various opportunities when the blessing could be received, who even do not wait till the end of mass but hurry out of church before the priest gives the blessing. As they appreciate it so little and have no desire for it, they may be assured that they will not partake of its fruit, even if sometimes they may be present when it is given.

PERORATION.

Do not imitate these lukewarm, negligent Christians. Appreciate the blessing which is given you in the name of the Blessed Trinity, and strive to obtain its salutary effects. Put great confidence in it. Christ has given power to his Church to obtain for her children by her blessing all benefits for time and eternity. Always receive the blessing with a pure, or at least a penitent heart; for impenitent, hardened sinners cannot expect *the blessing* but *the curse of God.* Receive the priest's blessing as often as possible; bless yourselves frequently, that the triune God may avert from you every calamity, and give you the grace with perseverance and fervor to serve him here, and to praise and glorify him with the elect in heaven, for ever and ever. Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

THE HOLY SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

The feast of the Most Holy Trinity, which we celebrate to-day is, without doubt, the greatest of all the feasts of the whole

year; for from this feast all others have their origin. The Church however does not celebrate this feast quite so solemnly as she does many others, for example, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, and this for two reasons; first, because with all possible solemnity she could not celebrate it worthily enough, and secondly, because she does not limit its celebration to one day only, but celebrates it every Sunday; and, for this reason, on all Sundays on which no proper feast falls the preface of the Blessed Trinity is said in the mass. The Blessed Trinity being the greatest mystery of our holy religion, we owe to it every blessing, our *creation*, our *redemption*, and our *sanctification*, and we are under the strict obligation unceasingly to offer it our homage and adoration. We may comply with this duty in some measure by signing ourselves frequently with the sign of the cross. I will speak then to you to-day of the sign of the cross, and explain to you:

I. The forms and signification of the sign of the cross;
II. The reason why we must sign ourselves with it.

PART I.

We distinguish two forms of the sign of the cross; the small cross, and the large or Latin cross, each of which we will consider at length.

1. *The small sign of the cross.*

(*a.*) This is made by signing with the thumb of the right hand the forehead, mouth, and breast, saying at the same time: "In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

(*b.*) We sign the forehead, and say, "In the name of the Father," to indicate that the Father is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity, as the forehead is the first and principal part of the human body. We then sign the mouth saying, "And of the Son," to signify that the Son, the eternal Word of the Father, is begotten by him, as our natural word is, as it were, begotten by the understanding, which has its seat in the forehead, because without the understanding we cannot bring forth a *rational* word. Lastly we sign the breast or the heart, saying, "And of the Holy Ghost," to indicate that the Holy Ghost is charity, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, for the heart is the seat of love. We say "in the name" and not "in the names," and thereby profess our belief in the *Unity of God*, namely, that God has only one essence, for the word "name" signifies as much as God's nature or essence. We add, "of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost," professing thereby that in the Godhead there is a *Trinity of Persons*, each of whom is truly God. Thus we profess as often as we make the sign of the cross the mystery of the most Holy Trinity.

But we profess also the *mystery of our Redemption*, for the sign of the cross, which we make with our hand, reminds us of the cross of Calvary, on which Christ died for our Redemption. But we make *three signs of the cross, one on our forehead, one on our mouth*, and *one on our breast*, to indicate that our Redemption is the common work of the three divine Persons; of the Father, who so loved the world as to give his orly-begotten Son; of the Son, who became man for our Redemption and died on the cross. and of the Holy Ghost, who applies to us the fruits of Redemption, purifies and sanctifies us.

(*c.*) There is still another reason for signing ourselves with the sign of the cross on the forehead, mouth, and breast. From the forehead or the understanding come forth the thoughts; from the mouth the words; from the heart the works. By signing these three parts of the body with the sign of the cross, and saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we mean it to be understood that we dedicate to the Blessed Trinity our thoughts, words and actions; that we will think, speak, and do nothing displeasing to the honor of the Blessed Trinity. We imprint upon the forehead, mouth and breast the seal of the holy cross, that the enemies of our soul may not enter into us and seduce us to sinful thoughts, words, or deeds. How insignificant then are these signs of the cross!

2. *The large or Latin cross.*

(*a.*) It is called the large cross, to distinguish it from the small one, because it is made from the forehead to the breast, and from one shoulder to the other, and is therefore a great deal larger than the cross made with the thumb. It is called the Latin cross because it is prescribed for divine worship, which is performed in Latin, and the words used when making the sign of the cross are likewise said in that language. It is made by touching with the tip of the fingers of the right hand the forehead, saying, *In nomine Patris;* the middle of the breast, saying, *et Filii*, and the left and right shoulders, saying, *et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

(*b.*) The signification of the large or Latin cross is the same as that of the small one. At the words, *In nomine Patris*, we touch the forehead, to confess that the Father is the first Person of the Godhead and the origin of the other two Persons; at the words, *et Filii*, we touch the breast or heart, to signify that the Son of

God came down from heaven and became man; and lastly by touching the left and the right shoulder and saying, *et Spiritus Sancti*, and uniting by this motion the two sides with each other, we profess that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one source. Formerly, as Innocent III. observes, the cross was made from the right to the left to signify that from the Jews, who, as the chosen people of God were standing at the right hand of God, salvation passed over upon the Gentiles, who on account of their apostacy from God, were supposed to be standing on the left. At present we make it from the left to the right, to express that by the death of Christ we were removed from the left side of sin and perdition to the right side of holiness and salvation.

We finish the sign of the cross with the word, *Amen*, which means, "So be it". With this word we assert that we will believe the mysteries of the most Holy Trinity and of the Redemption and everything that Jesus Christ has taught us, and that we will begin, continue and end all our actions for the honor and glory of the three divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

PART II.

There are two reasons for making the sign of the cross—

1. *Because the primitive Christians made it.* This is evident from many passages of the Fathers of the Church. Tertullian, who lived in the second century (A. D. 194), observes: "At every step and movement, whenever we come in or go out, when we dress ourselves, or prepare to go abroad, in the bath, at table, when lights are brought in, at lying or sitting down, whatever we may be doing, we make the sign of the cross upon our forehead." From this we see that the early Christians very often, far more frequently than we, made the sign of the cross. St. Ambrose says: "We make the sign of the cross upon the forehead and the breast; upon the forehead, that we may always confess him; upon the heart, that we may always love him." St. Augustine says: "All Christians sign themselves upon the forehead with the sign of the cross, the sign of the passion of Christ." St. John Chrysostom (397) thus addresses his hearers: "Everywhere is the symbol of the cross present to us. On this account we write in on our forehead, and we engrave it on our soul and minds." Thus the Holy Fathers speak of the sign of the cross as a universally known custom among the Christians of their time, without mentioning that it was ordained or introduced by any Pope or Council. From this we justly conclude with St. Augustine that "the sign of the cross was introduced by the Apostles themselves."

2. Because it *is a salutary sign;* for

(*a.*) It protects us from the assaults of the spirit of darkness. St. Ignatius, a disciple of St. John, says: "The sign of the cross is a token of victory against the power of the prince of darkness, who, when he sees it, is terrified, who, when he hears of it, is afraid." St. Cyril says: "As the dog is in dread of the stick with which he is struck, so the devil is terrified when he sees the sign of the cross made, because it reminds him of the wood of the cross, by which he was conquered." Julian the Apostate one day entered a pagan temple, in company with a noted idolator. The latter having invoked the demons, they at once made their appearance. Julian became alarmed, and forgetting for a moment that he had renounced the Christian religion, made the sign of the cross, as he had been formerly accustomed to do when any danger was near. Immediately the infernal spirits disappeared; so powerful and efficacious was this sign even when made by a Christian renegade. What power and efficacy, then, must it not have when made by a good Christian.

(*b.*) *It affords protection and help in all temptations,* whether they come from the world, the flesh, or the devil. When we are tempted to sin, when evil thoughts arise in our minds, when we are in danger of giving way to any temptation, let us at once make the sign of the cross. At this sight of the cross the powers of hell are terror-stricken. St. Anthony used to say to his disciples: "I need only make the sign of the cross to put to flight all the delusion and spells of the demon."

(*c.*) *It is a powerful and efficacious means against all natural evil,* as history proves. The death of Julian the apostate was followed by a tremendous earthquake all over the East. The rivers overflowed their banks, as if to submerge the earth by another deluge. At the sight of these prodigies the inhabitants of Epidaurus repaired to St. Hilarion and with tears in their eyes besought him to have pity on them and come to their aid. They took him to the sea-shore. There St. Hilarion knelt on the sand, prayed with fervor, and made the sign of the cross three times over the troubled waters. Immediately there followed a great calm. All the people of Epidaurus witnessed this miracle, and, for many years after, they ceased not to remember it with gratitude.—*St. Jerome, life of St. Hilarion.* The martyr, St. Tiburtius, condemned under the Emperor Diocletian to walk through a blazing fire, made the sign of the cross over it, and then walked over the burning coals without any injury. It is by the devout use of the sign of the cross that such miracles have been performed by almost every saint. God speaks to us through these miracles. By

them he wishes to impress upon us the great love and veneration which we should entertain for the instrument of his passion and of our Redemption.

(*d.*) *It obtains for us in general the blessing of heaven.* The cross, once the ignominious instrument of death, after Christ sanctified it and shed upon it his precious blood, has become the glorious instrument of life and the source of every blessing. The Church, therefore, never gives her blessing without making the sign of the cross; even when the priest gives the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament he does so in the form of a cross. Even in the holy sacrifice, in which Christ supplicates for blessings for us, the priest frequently makes the sign of the cross, because all the benedictions are mediated for us only through the death of Christ on the cross. If then we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, with the intention of drawing down the blessings of heaven upon us, we only follow the teaching and the custom of the Church, and may confidently hope that through this holy sign we shall obtain every blessing.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, I exhort you in these words of St. Cyprian: "Let no one be ashamed to confess his crucified Saviour, but let him sign his brow with the holy cross; yea, in all our actions the cross should be used, whether we eat or drink, come in or go out, go to rest or rise." The sign of the cross is very venerable and holy, because it reminds us of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity and of our Redemption. Among the early Christians it was already in use. If you frequently and devoutly, in the spirit of repentance and with confidence, make the sign of the cross, you will certainly experience its salutary effects; you will overcome all the enemies of your salvation here, and after this life you will triumph with Christ and the elect in heaven. Amen.

6. DOGMATICAL AND LITURGICAL SKETCH.

COMBINED.

THE WORSHIP OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

The festival of the Most Holy Trinity, which we celebrate to-day, does not date back to the earliest ages of Christianity, as one would be led to believe, but is of a later date. The reason is because this feast does not rest, as do the other feasts upon an historical fact, but upon a mystery of faith; and again, because all feasts have the adoration and glorification of the Most Holy Trinity for their object, and revolve round it. Pope John XXII., in the fourteenth century, ordained that this festival should be celebrated by the whole Christian world on the first Sunday after Pentecost. St. Vincent Ferrer gives two reasons why the Church annually celebrates this feast: first, because the feasts of the three Persons of the Godhead, which are celebrated on different days of the year, may be celebrated together; secondly, that Christians by this particular celebration may repair the negligences which they may perhaps have committed during the celebration of the other feasts of the three divine Persons. I intend to speak to-day of the worship of the Most Holy Trinity, and to show you—

I. Why we must worship the Most Holy Trinity;
II. How we must worship it.

Part I.

We must worship the Most Holy Trinity, because is the greatest and most beneficent mystery of our holy religion.

1. *The greatest mystery.*

To convince ourselves of the infinite greatness of this mystery, let us consider, first of all, what faith teaches us about it.

(*a.*) *There is only one God.* Divine revelation tells us this most emphatically: "The first commandment of all is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is *one God.*"—*Mark* 12: 29. Reason also tells us that there is but one God. God is the highest, most perfect

good. If there were more Gods than one, they would be either equal or unequal to one another; if they were equal to one another, none of them could say that he was the highest, more perfect good, because the others would be equal to him; but if they were unequal to one another, those who would be less perfect would not be the highest, the most perfect good, and, consequently, would not be God. In order to preserve upon earth the belief in one God, he made a covenant with the Israelites, and inculcated upon them most emphatically the duty of adhering to this faith. As often as they fell into idolatry he visited them with the severest punishments.

(*b.*) *There are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* Christ has revealed this truth in the clearest terms, saying in the gospel of this day: *Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Here Christ teaches us that in the one Godhead there are three Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Moreover, he frequently spoke of the three divine Persons; of God, his heavenly Father; of himself, who was doing all that the Father could do, and whom all should honor, as they honored the Father; and of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, whom he and the Father would send.

(*c.*) *Each of the three Persons is truly God.* The Father is truly God, the Son is truly God, and the Holy Ghost is truly God. Each one of the three Persons, therefore, possesses all the perfections which God possesses; from which it follows that the three Persons in the Godhead together are no more and no greater than only one of them, since every one of them possesses the entire Godhead. But although each of the three Persons is truly God, there are not three Gods, but only one God, because all three have only one and the same divine nature. If each Person had his own proper nature and essence different from the other Persons there would really be three Gods, but having the divine nature together in common, they are only one God.

(*d.*) *The three divine Persons, although they have but one nature or essence, differ from one another.* The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Ghost; another is the Son, another the Holy Ghost. The difference of the three divine Persons is *not* in the essence or substance. We must not "confound the Persons, nor divide the substance. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is from the Father *alone*, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son not made, nor created, nor begotten, but

proceeding." The Father is of himself, and thereby distinguishes himself from the Son and the Holy Ghost, who are not of themselves, but have their origin from the Father; the Son is begotten of the Father, and thereby he is distinguished from the Father, who is not begotten, but who is of himself; and the Son is again distinguished from the Holy Ghost, who is not begotten of the Father, but proceeds from the Father and the Son and thereby he is distinguished from the Father and the Son, who do not proceed. But the Son and the Holy Ghost, although they have their origin from the Father, are nevertheless equal to him, for the begotten of the Son by the Father, as well as the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, is from eternity.

Therein consists the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. What is more sublime, more venerable, more holy than this mystery! When we mention the mystery of the Trinity we mention God, who unites all perfections in himself in an infinite measure. The ocean is broad and deep, but it can be measured; its drops of water are many, but, strictly speaking, they are not countless. But it is otherwise with the perfections of God; their circumference cannot be measured, their number cannot be given. God is unsearchable, and we can do nothing but prostrate ourselves adoringly, and exclaim with St. Francis: "My God and my all!" Mentioning the mystery of the Trinity, we mention the three Persons in the Godhead, each of whom is what God is; we mention a Father, who possesses all divine perfections, a Son, who possesses all divine perfections, and a Holy Ghost, who also possesses all divine perfections. Where is there anything in heaven or upon earth, so grand, so wonderful, as the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity! We need not wonder therefore that the celestial spirits adore the Most Holy Trinity and exclaim unceasingly: "Holy, holy, holy the Lord God of hosts" (*Is.* 6: 3), and that the Church has always the honor and glory of God in view. Let us also honor the Most Holy Trinity with the deepest veneration and devotion, frequently repeating: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

2. *The most beneficent mystery.* To it we owe everything that is necessary to work out our salvation, viz.:—

(*a.*) *Faith;* for "without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Hebrews* 11: 6. But faith is a gift of the Most Holy Trinity; a gift of the Father, who sent his only-begotten Son into the world to preach to us his heavenly doctrine, wherefore Christ himself says: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."—*John* 7: 16. It is a gift of the Son, who preached the gospel himself and commissioned his Apostles to preach it; and it is a gift of the

Holy Ghost, who enlightens and governs the Church, and enables her to preserve her divine doctrine pure and undefiled.

(*b.*) *The forgiveness of sin;* for nothing defiled can enter into heaven. If God the Father had not sent his Son, we should not be redeemed, and should live and die in our sins. If the Son of God had not become man, and satisfied the divine justice no sin could be forgiven us. If the Holy Ghost did not give us his grace and sanctify us we should for ever remain in sin.

(*c.*) *Grace;* for without it we cannot keep the commandments of God, practise virtue, resist temptations, or persevere in good. This grace, too, comes from the Most Holy Trinity. God the Father has prepared for us the graces necessary for salvation; God the Son has merited for us these graces by his life, sufferings and death; God the Holy Ghost applies these graces unceasingly to us. How much reason, then, have we to praise and glorify the Blessed Trinity, the grandest and most beneficent mystery of our holy religion!

PART II.

To worship the Blessed Trinity worthily, we must dedicate to it *the three faculties of our soul, the understanding, the memory and the will.*

1. *The understanding.* The mystery of the Blessed Trinity surpasses all human comprehension. For how can we comprehend that in God there are three Persons, each of whom is truly God and who together are but one God? How can we explain the existence of the three Persons, that the Father is of himself, the Son begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son? How can we comprehend that the Son and the Holy Ghost are, like the Father, from eternity, although they have their origin from the Father? How can we comprehend that the three divine Persons are not near one another, but in one another, so that the Father is in the Son and the Holy Ghost, the Son in the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost in the Father and the Son? To this incomprehensibility the Church alludes in the epistle of this day, when she exclaims with the Apostles: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!"

We need not wonder, then, that we cannot comprehend the mystery of the Blessed Trinity; for when we cannot explain to our satisfaction a thousand things in nature, which we see with our own eyes, how can we fathom the essence of God? It must

suffice that Christ has revealed to us the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. If we believe with the learned that the earth moves, and the sun stands still, although it contradicts our observation, why should we not believe our divine Lord when he teaches us that there are three Persons in the Godhead and that these three Persons are only one God? Let us humbly believe what we cannot comprehend, and make a sacrifice of our understanding, for he who does not walk here in faith can never attain to intuition hereafter.

2. *The memory*, by thinking frequently with a grateful heart of the three great benefits of the Most Holy Trinity, viz.:—

(*a.*) *Creation*, which we attribute particularly to *God the Father*. How benevolent has God the Father shown himself toward us in the work of creation! It is a grace that be created us, but it is a still greater grace that he created us rational beings, yea, according to his own image! it is another grace that he created everything that is in heaven and upon earth for our use and benefit; but it is the greatest of all graces that he has created us for heaven and its unspeakable felicity. Add to this, that by his all-wise Providence we were born of Christian parents, whilst millions live and die in infidelity or error, and then tell me that you owe no thanks to God, your heavenly Father!

(*b.*) *Redemption*, which was effected by *God the Son*. He becomes man, lives thirty-three years in self-abasement, endures numberless distresses and persecutions, going about to preach his heavenly doctrine to the people, and doing good to all; finally he dies, after suffering unutterable pains, a most ignominous death. In such a way he redeems us. He enables us to become partakers of the fruits of Redemption; he founds the Church and deposits in her all the means of salvation. What love did not God the Son show us! Can we ever forget this self-sacrificing love?

(*c.*) *Sanctification*, which is particularly the work of the *Holy Ghost*. This Spirit teaches the Church all truth and makes her the infallible teacher of the Word of God; he sanctifies her, and effects that in her and through her we are justified; he governs and protects her to the end of time. He is also active in our hearts, for he enlightens us in all things concerning our salvation; he consoles us in all adversities, strengthens us in persecutions, and supports us with his grace in the practice of virtue. Should we not always remember and from the bottom of our hearts give thanks to the Holy Ghost for the solicitude and love with which he, like an affectionate mother, satisfies all our spiritual necessities?

3. *The will.* We must make an offering of it—

(*a.*) *To God the Father,* for he rigorously insists upon our doing his will in all things and makes our eternal salvation depend upon it. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth he will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 7: 21. Let us take Jesus for our pattern, who says of himself: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." —*John* 4: 34. Let us always pray with heart and lips: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(*b.*) *To God the Son,* by endeavoring to model our life according to his word and example. He is our pattern, to whom we must become conformable if we wish to be saved. "For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren."—*Rom.* 8: 29. Let us strive to be able to say with the Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me."—*Gal.* 2: 20.

(*c.*) *To God the Holy Ghost,* by employing for our salvation the graces he gives us. St. Paul teaches that we are temples of God, and that the Holy Ghost dwells in us. Avoid every mortal sin, thinking well on the word of the same Apostle: "If any man violate the temple of God (if any man commit a mortal sin), him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which you are." —*I. Cor.* 3: 17. Hearken to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and be governed by them. Receive the holy sacraments often with a heart well prepared, that the Holy Ghost may always dwell in your hearts and never withdraw his love and grace from you.

PERORATION.

The Blessed Trinity being the greatest and most beneficent mystery of our holy religion, we must worship it unceasingly—nay, our whole life should be an uninterrupted homage to it. Let us offer to the Triune God *our understanding* by humbly believing what Christ and his Church teaches in regard to the Most Holy Trinity and by anticipating with joy the moment when it will be granted to us to see the Triune God face to face; *our memory* by frequently thinking of the three great benefits of our creation, redemption, and sanctification and employing them for our salvation; and *our will,* by endeavoring always to be good children of our heavenly Father, true followers of Christ, and

worthy temples of the Holy Ghost. I finish with the blessing of the Apostle: "The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the charity *of God* and the communication of the *Holy Ghost* be with you all. Amen."

TRINITY SUNDAY.

7. LITURGICAL-MORAL SKETCH.

THE CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

When Christ was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the heavens opened, the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus, and the voice of his Father was heard, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—*Matt.* 3: 16, 17. The same occurred when we were baptized. Infected with original sin and as children of wrath we came into the world; when we received holy baptism we were cleansed from sin, and sanctified; God adopted us as his children, and was well pleased with us. The Holy Ghost also came down upon us, and made his abode in our heart, the heavens were opened for us, and if we had died in our baptismal innocence, we should have gone straight to heaven. We must call to mind to-day the great grace of baptism, celebrating as we are the feast of the Blessed Trinity, in whose name we are baptized. As the gospel of this day speaks of baptism, I shall avail myself of the opportunity of speaking of the ceremonies of baptism, because they vividly bring before us the graces of baptism and the obligation which we have thereby assumed. I will explain to you:

I. The ceremonies which precede,
II. Which accompany,
III. Which follow, Baptism.

PART I.

The sponsors with the person to be baptized do not go immediately into the church but remain at the entrance. This is an ancient or-

dinance of the Church, which was always observed by persons desirous of baptism. When Jews or Gentiles asked for baptism, admission into the Church was not granted them at once; they were first of all obliged to receive thorough instruction in religion and to profess solemnly their belief in Jesus Christ. In memory of this ancient ordinance infants to be baptized are not admitted at once into the Church, but must remain at the entrance. This ceremony reminds us of the fact that the child does not yet belong to the Church, because baptism is the door through which we enter into the Church and become partakers of her graces. It is also thereby indicated that without baptism no one can enter into the Kingdom of heaven, as Christ himself says: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—*John* 3: 5.

2. The priest is vested in a white surplice, and uses two stoles the one violet, the other white. The violet color of the stole signifies the deplorable state to which sin has reduced mankind. It is also emblematic of contrition on account of this sin, of which the person to be baptized is still the slave. The priest, wearing the violet stole, comes to the entrance of the church, and addressing the sponsor or sponsors, asks: *What is the name of the child to be?* The sponsor or sponsors mention the name which the child is to take. This also reminds us of the custom in the primitive Christian times. The persons to be baptized, after having received sufficient instruction, were obliged to give in their names to the bishop, to be registered for baptism. This was done for the purpose of changing their former pagan name for a name of a Christian saint or at least uniting the name of a saint with it. The Roman Ritual ordains the names of saints to be given to the persons to be baptized, that by their example they may be urged to a pious life and be protected by them. A good Christian will frequently meditate on the life and acts of his patron saint, and endeavor to imitate him as closely as possible, that he may eventually come to him into heaven.

3. The priest then interrogates the person to be baptized by name, as follows: *N., What dost thou ask of the Church of God?* He, or in his name the sponsor, answers: *Faith.* Why does he first ask faith? Because faith is the root and the beginning of justification, and the first requisite for salvation, for, "without faith it is impossible to please God."—*Heb.* 11: 6. The person to be baptized asks faith of the Church, because the true faith taught by Christ and necessary for salvation is to be found in the Catholic Church alone, and in her it is always preserved and delivered pure and undefiled. The next question is: *What doth faith obtain for thee?* And the answer is: *Life everlasting.* Then

the priest adds: *If then thou will enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.* By these words the priest declares that the living faith, which manifests itself in an exact observance of the commandments of God, and not dead faith, leads to life everlasting. It points out to the person to be baptized the way he must go in order to be saved; and gives him to understand that he must believe all that God has revealed, and unite his faith with a holy life.

4. The priest then breathes thrice upon the face of the person to be baptized and says once: *Go out of him thou unclean spirit, and give place unto the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete.* According to our corporeal birth we are children of wrath, and under the dominion of Satan. The evil spirit must be expelled; therefore the priest orders him to depart. The priest then breathes three times upon the child. This breathing signifies the communication of the new spiritual life. This breathing is done three times in memory of the Blessed Trinity, by which the new life is imparted; and it is done in the form of a cross, because Christ has redeemed us by his death on the cross. When the evil spirit has gone out from man, the Holy Ghost makes his abode in the man's heart, and therefore the priest says: *Give place unto the Holy Ghost the Paraclete.* The ceremony of breathing was in use in the first ages of the Church, and St. Augustine draws from it a proof of original sin.

5. The priest then makes the sign of a cross, with his thumb on the forehead and on the breast of the person, saying: *Receive the sign of the cross both upon thy forehead and also upon thy heart, take unto thee the faith of the heavenly precepts, and in thy manners be such that thou mayest now be the temple of God.* The sign of the cross upon the forehead and breast of the child signifies that he is called a new-born Christian, to be received into the army of Christ, that he must confess his faith without fear, fight against untruth and sin, and courageously follow his divine Saviour on the way of the cross.—*Matt.* 16: 24. The priest now petitions God to bestow upon the person the grace necessary to enable him to perform his duties.

6. *The priest now with an appropriate prayer lays his hand upon the head of the person to be baptized.* By this imposition of hands the priest indicates that the Church takes him under her protection, and that through her hand the fulness of blessing will flow to him, whereby he will be enabled to renounce Satan, to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and in it to serve him joyfully. This

is expressed in the prayer which accompanies the imposition of the hand.

7. Then the priest puts a small quantity of blessed salt into the mouth of the person to be baptized, saying: *N., receive the salt of wisdom; let it be to thee a propitiation unto life everlasting.* This very ancient ceremony has a manifold meaning. Salt is pungent; the person to be baptized is reminded that as a Christian he must be prepared for various sufferings and tribulations. Salt soon dissolves in the mouth, and it is thereby indicated that these sufferings and tribulations here below are of short duration. Salt imparts a savor or relishable taste, and reminds the person to be baptized that he must now have a relish for good works. The salt is also the symbol of wisdom, as when St. Paul says: "Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt."—*Col.* 4: 6. Salt is a well known preservative against corruption; and the only corruption of our soul is sin, which the Sacrament of Baptism is now about to take away. This ceremony is indeed full of meaning, since it signifies that the person baptized must make known to the thoughtless world the sweet savor of the holy law of God by the good example of a virtuous and modest conversation, and show by all his works that it is the doctrine of Christ that preserves the soul from the foul corruption of sin, and establishes a firm and lasting hope of the resurrection of our mortal bodies.

8. Now comes the exorcism, with sacred words and prayers, for the purpose of banishing the devil and of weakening or of totally destroying his power. The Church does not perform these exorcisms as if she believed that the person to be baptized were really possessed by the devil, but for a twofold reason; first to give a public proof of her faith, that man by baptism is delivered from the servitude of the devil and restored to the liberty of children of God; and secondly, to implore God's grace for the person to be baptized, that the power which Satan has acquired over him in consequence of original sin may be broken, and that he may never again succeed in bringing him under his dominion. At the conclusion of the exorcism, the priest makes the sign of the cross upon the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying: *And this sign of the holy cross which we make upon his forehead, do thou, accursed devil, never dare to violate. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.* Then the priest lays his hand upon the head of the person to be baptized and prays that God may enlighten, cleanse and sanctify him, and always keep him in the path of truth and virtue.

9. Now follows the introduction of the person to be baptized into the Church. The priest lays the end of his stole upon him

and leads him into the church, saying: *Enter into the temple of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life everlasting.* The priest leads, or rather draws, the person to be baptized into the church, an act which reminds us of the words of Jesus: "No man can come to me, except the Father, who has sent me, draw him."—*John* 6: 44. Let us follow the inspirations of grace.

When entering the church and proceeding to the baptismal Font, the priest, together with the sponsors, say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's prayer. This again reminds us of the first ages of the Church, when the Catechumens were required to commit the Apostles' Creed to memory, and to recite it before they were baptized. As the Apostles' Creed contains the principal mysteries of our holy religion, the person to be baptized, by reciting it, gives a public testimony that he will believe and do all things whatsoever Christ teaches and commands. But, not being able to do this of himself, he says the Lord's prayer, in order to obtain the necessary grace to do so, prayer being the principal means of obtaining the grace of God.

After a third exorcism the priest wets his right thumb with spittle from his mouth, and touches therewith, in the form of a cross, the right ear of the person to be baptized and afterwards the left, saying: *Ephpheta, that is, to say, be opened. And touching his nostrils, adds: For a savor of sweetness. But thou, Satan, fly, behold the God, great and mighty, draweth near, the God who taketh away the prey from the strong one.* This ceremony is an imitation of what Christ did himself when he gave sight to a blind man, and healed a deaf and dumb man.—*John* 9: 6; *Mark* 7: 33, 34. Of this ceremony St. Ambrose says: "The priest touches thy ears that they may open themselves to the priestly admonition, and thy nostrils that thou mayest obtain the good odor of heavenly piety, that thou mayest be able to say with the Apostle: 'We are before God an odor of Christ'."

Part II.

Tha ceremonies which accompany Baptism.

1. The moment now arrives when the person to be baptized is transplanted from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ, and the covenant of everlasting love and fidelity is made between him and God. A solemn abjuration now takes place. The priest asks: *Dost thou renounce Satan? and all his works? and all his pomps?* And the answer to each of these questions is: *I do renounce them.* In the early days of the Church particular stress was laid upon this abjuration, for which reason it was made with great solemnity. The persons to be baptized were required to turn their faces toward the setting of the sun, to indicate that

they renounced for ever the devil, the prince of darkness; they were also requested to stretch out their hands in the same direction, and to put off their shoes, to signify that they would go no more into the old way of sin. This form of abjuration agreed entirely with the one now in use, for, according to St. Cyril of Jerusalem, it was as follows: "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomps, and all thy service." What does it mean to renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his pomp? To renounce *the devil* means to hate him, not to listen to his suggestions, to despise and reject his illusions. To renounce *the works* of the devil means to hate and shun sin. To renounce *the pomps* of the devil means to put off all pride, all ambition, all vanity, and to be humble of heart. Pride is named especially among the works of the devil, because it is peculiar to him and was the beginning of all sin.

2. After the solemn abjuration, *the priest anoints the person to be baptized with the oil of the Catechumens, upon the breast and between the shoulders; saying: I anoint thee with the oil of salvation, in Christ Jesus our Lord, that thou mayest have life everlasting. R. Amen.* The anointing is a symbol of strength; in ancient times the gladiators anointed themselves with oil to strengthen themselves for the combat. The person to be baptized is anointed, to make him remember that he must fight hard against all the enemies of his salvation. He is anointed upon the breast, to signify that he must fight a good fight with courage for God and his soul; then between the shoulders, to indicate that he stands in need of much strength and patience in order to carry the yoke of the Lord all the days of his life.

3. Next, the priest changes the violet stole for a white one. As the violet stole signifies the sinful state of the person to be baptized, so the white one is a symbol of the innocence and purity conferred by the sacrament. The priest asks him: *N., Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?* The answer is: *I do believe.* Again: *Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born into this world, and suffered for us?* Answer: *I do believe. Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?* Answer: *I do believe.* As you perceive, the Church, before she baptizes, thrice demands of the person to be baptized a profession of faith. The first time, at the beginning, when she asks: *What dost thou ask of the Church of God?* to which the answer is, *Faith.* The second time, when, on entering the Church, she makes him say the Apostles' Creed, and, the third time when she proposes to him the above mentioned questions. She does

this because in the first centuries of the Church the Catechumens before they were baptized were obliged to make, three separate professions of faith publicly and solemnly; also to indicate to the person to be baptized his strict obligation to remain faithful to the Church. What a horrible sin, then, it is for a Catholic to fall away from his faith!

4. Lastly, the priest asks the person to be baptized: *N., Wilt thou be baptized?* Answer: *I will.* Christ does not force his graces upon any one, but simply invites the reception of them; he does not desire slaves, but children who love him. The person to be baptized, having now declared his intention to receive baptism, the priest pours water on his head, saying at the same time: *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.* In doing this, the priest administers the Sacrament of Baptism; the baptized person is cleansed from sin, and is sanctified, becoming a child of God and an heir of heaven. The Church upon earth rejoices that a child is born to her, the angels and saints in heaven exult and salute the baptized person as their brother; the Triune God looks down upon him with pleasure, and takes up his abode in his heart. And now a few words on the ceremonies after baptism.

Part III.

The priest anoints the baptized person on the crown of his head with chrism, saying: *May God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost and who hath granted thee the remission of all thy sins, himself anoint thee with the chrism of salvation in the same Christ Jesus our Lord, unto life eternal. R. Amen.* This anointing was ordained by Pope Sylvester (314—337), because owing to the absence of the bishop the newly baptized could not be confirmed, confirmation being usually administered on the day of baptism. But afterwards it took place no matter whether confirmation succeeded baptism at once or later. This unction with chrism has a manifold significance:—

1. It sets the truth before our eyes that the baptized person is one of the anointed, that is, a Christian, and no longer belongs to Satan, but to Christ. Hence, the Roman Catechism says: "After baptism is completed the priest anoints the crown of the head of the baptized person with chrism, that he may know that from that day he is a member united to Christ and incorporated in his body, and that he has the name of Christian from Christ." The anointing with chrism calls to our minds the dignity to which we have been raised by baptism. Christ is Priest and King.

Man being united with Christ in baptism partakes of his priestly and royal dignity. Hence St. Peter writes: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood."—*I. Pet.* 2: 9. In a certain sense all Christians are *priests*, for they participate in the holy sacrifice which the priest offers up to God at the altar, and at the same time are under the obligation to offer themselves up to God, as "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God."—*Rom.* 12: 1. They are also *Kings;* for they are called upon to govern themselves, their evil inclinations and passions, and after this life to reign with Christ in heaven, Lastly, the baptized are anointed with chrism to indicate that their souls have become temples of the Holy Ghost and chosen vessels, which are destined in due time to receive the sacred body and blood of Jesus Christ, as the chalices and patens are also blessed and anointed, that they may be worthy vessels for the reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

2. After the anointing the priest puts upon the head of the person baptized a white linen cloth, saying: *Receive this white garment and see thou carry it without stain before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ that thou mayest have eternal life.* In early times the newly baptized were invested with a white garment, to remind them of the innocence and purity which they had then received at baptism, and they wore it for eight days, after which they laid it off solemnly in the church. The white garment recalls to our mind the inestimable grace of baptism, in which we were cleansed from every stain of sin, and sanctified, and the obligation which we have contracted to preserve with the greatest care our baptismal innocence, and to thank God for this grace all the days of our life.

3. Lastly, the priest gives to the person baptized a lighted candle saying: *N., Receive this burning light, and keep thy baptism blameless. Observe the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the nuptials thou mayest meet him together with all the saints in the heavenly court and have eternal life and live for ever and ever.* The burning light signifies that the baptized person has been transplanted from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, according to the words of the Apostle: "You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light."—*Ephes.* 5: 8. The burning light is also an admonition to us that our faith must not be cold and dead, but must be a burning and an illuminating one; that we must have an ardent love of God and be prepared, like a lighted candle, to be consumed in his service; finally that we must give a good example to our fellow-men, according to the admonition of our Lord: "So let your light before men, that they may see your

good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16. Then the priest dismisses the baptized person, saying: *Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee.* The baptized person is reconciled with God, is a child of God, and therefore may go in peace. But he must always preserve his peace, and as he can do this only by the grace of God, the priest wishes that the Lord may be with him, accompany him, and protect him in all his ways.

PERORATION.

These are the ceremonies of baptism; take to heart their significance and fulfil the duties of which they remind you. Look back upon your past life, and examine whether you have complied with the obligations which you have taken upon yourselves at your baptism. If you find that you have broken the convenant you entered into with God, repent of your unfaithfulness, ask pardon of God, and promise him that henceforth you will be and remain his good children. Watch and pray that the enemy of your salvation may never again obtain power over you or rivet his fetters upon you. Frequently renew your baptismal vows, especially on the days you go to communion, saying: "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomps. I have sworn fidelity to my divine Saviour; him I will serve all the days of my life." In baptism you have been born for heaven; live and labor then for heaven, that it may become your portion and inheritance. **Amen.**

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE. *I. John* 3: 13-18. Dearly beloved: Wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

Our Blessed Lord repeatedly told the Apostles and all his followers that they would be hated and persecuted by the world, that is, by unbelieving and wicked people. Thus he says: "You shall be hated by all men for my name's sake."—*Matt.* 10: 22. And again: "If the world hate you; know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—*John* 15: 18, 19. St. John, in the epistle of this day, calls our attention to this prediction of Jesus, saying: *Wonder not if the world hate you*, in other words, Jesus has foretold this hatred, and his word must come to pass; nor must you desire to be looked upon as better than your divine Saviour, whom the world hated most bitterly and persecuted unto the death of the cross. "The servant is not greater than his master."—*John* 15: 20. After this, St. John tells the faithful that being Christians they should not return hatred for hatred, but rather, according to the ex-

ample of Jesus, love all men; and then at a greater length speaks of the love of our neighbor:

I. Of its motives;
II. Of its marks.

Part I.

St. John in the lesson of this day gives two reasons why we must love our neighbor:—

1. *The great advantage which the love of our neighbor procures; for he says: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."* What kind of life is it to which we pass when we love our neighbor?

(*a.*) *The life of grace.* God is all love; for it is out of love that he created us, that he preserves us and has given his only-begotten Son for our Redemption; it is love that imparts to us so many graces in order to lead us to life everlasting. God being all love, he finds no greater pleasure in anything than in our love for all men, even for our enemies and those who offend us. Suppose that persons who are animated by a sincere love of their neighbor are still in infidelity and error, we must not despair of their salvation; God will give them great, even extraordinary, graces that they may embrace the true faith. We have an example in the centurion Cornelius of Cæsarea. He was a pagan, but God in a miraculous manner called him to the faith. He sent him an angel, who commanded him to call St. Peter from Joppe, who would tell him what he was to do. Peter, also favored with a wonderful apparition, came, and after converting him baptized him and his whole house. What was the reason that Cornelius came to the faith in so extraordinary a manner? Principally on account of his love for his neighbor, for the angel who had appeared to him, emphatically said: "Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God."—*Acts* 10: 4. If Cornelius, instead of loving his fellow-men and doing them good, had treated them roughly and uncharitably he would undoubtedly have remained in Paganism and perished eternally, but because he assisted the needy and the poor so charitably, God even worked miracles to bring him into the true fold. So much avails the love of our neighbor. The same may be said of sinners. Suppose some one falls into grievous sins, everything good may be expected of him if he sincerely loves his fellow-men, assists them in their wants, and forgives injuries. God will give him great graces, and, if it should be necessary, even extraordinary graces, that he may rise from his fall and do penance. "Forgive thy

neighbor if he hath hurt thee; and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee when thou prayest."—*Ecclus.* 28: 2. And Christ himself says: "If you will forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses."—*Matt.* 6: 14. It is the charity that manifests itself by works of mercy that obtains for us pardon and mercy. The archangel Raphael said: "Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."—*Tob.* 12: 9. "We have," says St. Ambrose, "many means by which we can redeem ourselves from our sins. Have you money? Redeem yourselves from your sins. The Lord is not purchasable, but you are, for you have been sold by your sins. Redeem yourselves by your works, ransom yourselves by your money."

(*b.*) *The life of glory.* If we love our fellow-men and are merciful towards them, we may confidently hope for life everlasting. This is evident from the sentence of Christ on the day of judgment: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat," etc. Then he adds: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."—*Matt.* 25: 34. St. Chrysostom says: "Heaven is a bank and a mercantile house; give bread, and take paradise; give a little and take much; give what is perishable, and take what is imperishable." One day St. Francis Xavier applied to a Portuguese merchant to give him a sum of money for a dowry for a poor virgin. The merchant who was engaged at the time in playing a game of cards, handed him the key of his safe, saying: "Take what you need." When the game was finished, the merchant asked the Saint how much money he had taken. "Five hundred gold pieces," he replied. "Oh," said the merchant, "why did you not take more, as I was willing to give you the half of my cash, if you needed it." St. Francis thereupon predicted that he would have success in all his undertakings, and that God would make known to him by a sensible sign the hour of his death three days beforehand. Many years had elapsed, when sitting one day at dinner, he noticed that the wine he was drinking had a bitter taste. Thereupon he said: "Now it is time for me to prepare for death, St. Francis Xavier told me that three days after receiving a warning, I should enter into eternal life." He accordingly prepared himself for death with the greatest care, and after the expiration of three days, fell happily asleep in our Lord. Thus will they who love the brethren pass from death to life—to the life of grace and to the life of glory. Which of us does not ardently wish for this twofold life? Well, then, let us sincerely love all men, and our wish will be realized.

2. *The great loss we suffer when we do not love our neighbor.*

(*a.*) *He that loveth not, abideth in death.* What kind of death is it of which the Apostle here speaks? It is the spiritual death, the state of mortal sin. In order to obtain the forgiveness of our sins and to come to the life of grace, it is absolutely necessary that we should love our neighbor. If a man were to have profound contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, if he were then sincerely to confess his sins, and receive absolution, still entertaining hatred or enmity towards his neighbor for whatever cause, neither his contrition, nor his purpose of amendment, nor his confession, nor absolution would profit him anything; he would abide in the state of sin. Without the love of our neighbor no sin can be forgiven; for Christ says, in plain and direct words: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins."—*Matt.* 6: 15. This is also the reason why no priest, not even the Pope himself, can give absolution to any one who entertains enmity and is not resolved to give it up. You ought to ponder well this truth, and shun nothing so much as disunion and enmity; and if peace has been disturbed hasten to be reconciled at once with your neighbor. Those who are destitute of the love of their neighbor abide in death or the state of sin and can do nothing meritorious for heaven. To perform meritorious works the state of grace is necessary. Uncharitable persons may pray, fast, practise various virtues, and perform the duties of their state of life, but despite all these practices they cannot merit the least thing for heaven; hence the Apostle says: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 2, 3. What injury then those do to themselves who instead of loving their neighbor hate him and bear him ill-will!

(*b.*) But a still greater calamity awaits such malevolent people, for St. John says: *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself.* He who hates his brother becomes guilty of a double murder: the spiritual murder of himself, and the corporal murder of his neighbor. Hatred, according to its nature, is a mortal sin; and he who commits a mortal sin, deprives his soul of supernatural life or sanctifying grace. Our Lord says: "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."—*Matt.* 5: 21, 22. Here our Lord emphatically declares that unjust anger and hatred are as culpable before

God as real murder. Before God the will goes for the deed. He therefore who bears ill-will to his neighbor and nourishes so great an anger that he wishes he were dead; that if he had an opportunity he would take his life, as Cain did Abel's, is a murderer in the eyes of God. But man slaughter and wilful murder are crimes which draw eternal damnation after them. St. John includes murderers among the greatest criminals, and says that "their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."—*Apoc.* 21: 8. St. John now comes to speak of the marks of love.

PART II.

1. In order to show us how we must manifest our love towards our neighbor, St. John directs our attention to Christ, saying: *In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us.*

(*a.*) It was love that induced Jesus Christ to become man and appear upon earth; it was love that actuated him to live for thirty-three years in poverty and lowliness, and to endure sufferings of every description; it was love that made him die on the cross. It being absolutely impossible to make a greater sacrifice for any one than to die for him, he gives us the most perfect example of the love of our neighbor. Therefore he says himself: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—*John* 15: 13. But the love of Jesus went still further, for he died, not for his friends, but rather for his enemies, all men being sinners, and, consequently, enemies of God. Therefore St. Paul says that, "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."—*Rom.* 5: 10.

(*b.*) This mark of the love of our neighbor we must also have; for St. John says: *And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* We find this mark of brotherly love in many saints. The Apostles preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, endure unspeakable tribulations and sufferings, and finally die as martyrs. What is it that makes them undergo so heroically all these tribulations, and finally death? brotherly love; for. to bring men to the knowledge of God and to save them from everlasting ruin was the motive of all their actions. Why do so many missionaries go, even in our days, to pagan tribes and preach the gospel to them? From no other motive than that of brotherly love. They are grieved that so many souls redeemed by the blood of Christ are languishing in darkness, and the shadow of death, and in danger of being lost, and for this reason they leave father and mother and everything that is near and dear to them, renounce

all pleasures and conveniences of life, endure countless tribulations and dangers, and are prepared at any moment to lay down their lives.

(*c.*) We also must be prepared to give our lives for the welfare of our fellow-men, if our duty or position demands it. Thus priests and pastors of souls, when there is a question of the salvation of the souls entrusted to their charge, are obliged, in the administration of the sacraments, to expose their lives to danger and even to sacrifice them. We are also bound, under all circumstances, to fear neither difficulties nor dangers when it is necessary to prove our love for our neighbor in deed and in truth. This we should do whenever we see him in great danger of body or soul. It is certain that Christians whose hearts do not throb in sympathy with the joys and sorrows of their fellow-men, and for their sake will not take upon themselves even little inconveniences and hardships, do not bear the mark of love.

2. St. John now passes on to another mark of love, and teaches us that not only by the sacrifice of our lives, but in a much easier manner, we must manifest our love for our neighbor; namely, *by works of mercy*. He says: *He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?* These words of the Apostle deserve our undivided attention and considerations Can there be anything easier than to give of your superfluous substance to the needy? Is it so very hard to give towards the support of the poor a small portion of the money which you do not need for yourselves or yours? Could you not spare that dress, which hangs unused in your wardrobe, and give it to some poor needy woman? Can you not give a piece of bread to a beggar, who, perhaps, has not tasted a morsel for a whole day? You throw food to your dog, and refuse a morsel to your brother and sister. He who is charitable to God's poor, bears in himself the mark of fraternal charity, and may hope for all graces and rewards, which God has promised for the practice of this virtue. On the contrary, he who will not practise fraternal charity in so easy a manner; he who in his hard-heartedness lets the hungry beggar totter from his door, may forsooth call himself a Christian, but he is evidently nothing but a mean, contemptible, uncharitable person, acting in direct opposition to the chief commandment of Christ, the commandment of love, and consequently losing all the graces of Christianity. Such an uncharitable man has not a spark of the love of God in him; he is like Dives and will share his lot in the other world, in hell.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, St. John exclaims: *My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* With these words the Apostle cautions us against feigned love and exhorts us to true love. He who pretends to have compassion on the poor and unfortunate and speaks to them in a very pleasant manner, and even makes them fair promises in order to get rid of them easily; in short, he who seemingly sympathizes in words, but has no compassion in his heart for the needy, nor the will to help them, is a hypocrite; and as such he will be treated on the last day. He who truly and from the heart loves his neighbor, and helps him as often as he can, shows his love *in deed and in truth.* Let us show this true and practical love towards our fellow-men whenever, wherever and however we can, that we may bear the mark of discipleship of Jesus, who says: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John* 13: 35. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL. *Luke* 14: 16-24. At that time: Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.

2. HOMIETIC SKETCH.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

One of the chief Pharisees invited our Lord to dine with him on the Sabbath day. Many lawyers and Pharisees were guests at the same time, watching with jealous eyes and hoping that he would say or do something which they could make use of as an accusation against him. It was then that he healed a certain man who had the dropsy, and plainly proved to the Pharisees that works of mercy are not a violation of the Sabbath. At the same time he spoke to them of humility, intimating that the proud have nothing to expect but humiliation, but that the humble may look for exaltation. Then, turning to the host, he told him that if he should invite, not his friends and kinsmen and neighbors who are rich, but the poor, the feeble, the lame and the blind, his hospitality would be rewarded hereafter. When one of them who sat at the table with him said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the hingdom of God," Jesus took occasion to speak to them the parable of the great supper mentioned in the gospel of this day. That the meaning of this parable may become plain to us, we will propose to ourselves and answer the following questions:

I. What do we understand by the great supper?
II. Who were they that were invited, but did not come?
III. Who are the others that were invited, and did come to the supper?

PART I.

By the great supper we understand—

1. *The Church established by Christ.* Christ calls his Church—

(*a.*) *A supper.* Supper is the last meal of the day; after it there is no other meal; night comes; labor ceases and all go to rest. The Church is like a supper. She is the last institution for the salvation of mankind. In the first period of the world, which embraces about two thousand five hundred years, *the true religion* was with *the patriarchs;* then came the *Jewish Church,* established by God as the institution for the salvation of men, which existed from the time of Moses to that of Christ, an interval of about fifteen hundred years. Jesus Christ then appeared on earth and established the holy *Catholic Church,* which will last to the

end of time. All who desire to work out their salvation must belong to this Church, for she is the only saving institution upon earth. In vain do the Jews expect another Messias and a Church founded by him; the true Messias, Jesus Christ, has indeed come eighteen hundred years ago. It is a mad undertaking for the freethinkers and the enemies of the Catholic Church to found new religious societies without faith in Christ, nay, without faith in God, in an immortal soul, heaven and hell; societies whose members live and work only for the present life, and whose desires and purposes aim at making this life enjoyable. Let us never waver in our holy faith, let us cling to the Church all the more firmly, the more she is hated, calumniated and persecuted.

(*b.*) *A great supper.* The Church is a great supper on account of her Founder; for this is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Where is there an earthly kingdom that is founded by God himself, as is the holy Catholic Church? All kingdoms are the work of man, but the Church is the work of God. The Church is a great supper, because of the multitude of her members; she is spread over the whole earth, and numbers two hundred and fifty millions of souls. Where is there an earthly empire that has so many subjects. The Church is a great supper on account of the greatness and multitude of the graces which she dispenses. In her Jesus has deposited the immense treasure of his merits and sent her the Holy Ghost, who unceasingly labors in her for the illumination and sanctification of men. The Church is a great supper on account of her perpetual duration. Whilst all temporal kingdoms and all religious societies go to pieces, as history teaches, the Catholic Church, notwithstanding so many afflictions and persecutions, exists from century to century, for she has the divine promise that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.

2. *Holy Communion*, which is—

(*a.*) *A banquet*, for in it we receive the body and blood of our Lord for the nourishment of our soul unto eternal life. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."—*John* 6: 55, 56. Jesus, who vouchsafes to come to us with his humanity and divinity, unites himself most intimately with us, and gives himself whole and entire to us, so that we are enabled to overcome all temptations, to grow in virtue, and to persevere to the end in the service of God.

(*b.*) *A supper*, for it is the continual renewing of what our Lord did at the Last Supper, when he gave his sacred flesh and pre-

cious blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, to his Apostles, for the nourishment of their souls. It is also a supper because it must be received in the darkness of night by the light of faith. The eye sees at communion nothing but common bread. The sacred Host has the same taste and smell as bread, but here the senses are not judges, but simply faith alone. This faith tells us that what we receive in holy communion is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, together with his soul and Divinity. It cannot be hard for us to believe this incomprehensible mystery, for Jesus, the eternal, infallible truth, assures us in plain words: "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." —*John* 6: 52.

(*c.*) *A great supper.* Great *on account of Jesus,* who has prepared this heavenly banquet, for he is not a mere man or an angel, but God himself—great *on account of the food,* which is nothing less than the true body and the true blood of our Lord with his soul and Divinity—great *on account of the multitude of the guests,* for these are all the Catholic Christians upon earth—great *on account of the angels,* who invisibly assist at holy communion, and adore Jesus with the most profound veneration. Everything is great in holy communion; but we are little and unworthy, and yet Christ invites us. Oh, how great is his love for us! Ought we not to appear at this divine banquet with the greatest joy, in order to satisfy our hunger and thirst? Ought we still to have a desire for the food of the world and of the flesh, which is but deceitful bread?

Part II.

And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. Who are they that were invited? If we apply the parable of the supper to the Church—

1. They are the Jews, especially their chief men, the high priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees. The servant who was sent at the hour of supper, and invited them to come, is Christ, who is called a servant, because he appeared in the greatest lowliness, in the form of a servant. The hour of the supper is the time when Christ appeared upon earth, preached the gospel, suffered and died.

(*a.*) *They began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it. I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of*

oxen and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. Thus every one had a pretext, by which he tried to justify his refusal. Here are mentioned the three principal vices, which were the causes why the Jews would not hearken to Jesus, namely, *pride, avarice*, and *impurity*. Christ preached, by word and example, humility, contempt of the world and of the goods of the world, and mortification of the flesh. The Jews, especially those called respectable, would not hear of these things, for they were very carnal and worldly-minded, full of pride and ambition, attached with all their soul to the world and its goods, and the slaves of the basest passions. They had an entirely erroneous idea of the promised Messias; they believed that he would appear with power and glory, make them the first nation of the earth, and procure for them riches, honors, and everything that the heart could desire. Now, as Christ was, and preached, the very contrary to what they imagined of their Messias and hoped from him, they turned away in contempt, and persevered in their unbelief.

(*b.*) *Pride, avarice*, and *impurity* are still the three principal reasons why so many men keep aloof from the Catholic Church, or fall away from her. Not a few infidels and heretics are convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith, and still do not embrace it; either their pride does not permit them to acknowledge their error, and to give testimony of the truth, or fear of temporal loss prevents their conversion; or they cannot bring themselves to renounce their carnal desires, and hence they persevere in error or sin. On the day of judgment it will become manifest that many heathens, Jews, Mohammedans and heretics persevered in their separation from the Church, not from ignorance, but only on account of some one of these three vices. He who permits himself to be ruled by pride, avarice or impurity, is in danger of apostatizing from the faith. History proves that all heresies and defections from the Church have their origin in these vices. Proud people think that they understand everything better than the Church, and deeming it a disgrace to submit to her decisions fall away from her. With how many Catholics is not carnal lust the cause of their turning their back upon the Church! How many Catholics become Protestants from worldly motives, for the sake of a high-class marriage! If these three vices could be banished out of the world, the Catholic Church would be gladly received by all the nations of the earth, and would have no heresy to deplore, no defection from the Catholic faith.

2. If we apply the parable to the holy communion, again the three vices named are the reason that many Christians approach the table of the Lord so seldom or not at all.

Part I.

The servant returning told these things to his Lord. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

1. Now the question is: Who were they that were invited, if by the last supper we understand the Church of Christ?

(*a.*) *The poor, the feeble, the blind, and the lame* are the better-minded Jews, the Samaritans, and the Pagans. Among the Jews and Samaritans it was particularly the *poor* that believed in Christ, for owing to their poverty they found themselves drawn towards the poor despised Jesus, whilst the rich would have nothing to do with him; then the *feeble*, the distressed and helpless, whom Christ received so affectionately and who on that account adhered to him with a grateful heart; again the *blind*, the common people, who were not ashamed to acknowledge their ignorance and who allowed themselves to be taught by him, whilst the Scribes and Pharisees, proud of their boasted science, rejected the gospel of Jesus with contempt; finally, the *lame*, that is, the publicans and sinners, who well understood their misery and their insufficiency to rid themselves of it, whilst the Scribes and Pharisees considered themselves just, and therefore felt no want or necessity for redemption from sin and damnation; nay, they even blamed our Lord for having intercourse with sinners.

(*b.*) By those in highways and hedges we understand the heathens who in the last days of the world become Christians. God wills that all men may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, therefore the Church will exist to the end of time, and preach the gospel to all nations, that all who are of good will may partake of the fruits of Redemption. For this reason Christ himself says: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations: and then shall the consummation come."—*Matt.* 24: 14. We may refer this to the great distresses and calamities which will come upon men before the end of the world, such as famine, pestilence, inundations, earthquakes, wars, and other evils, by which unbelievers and sinners are, as it were, compelled to submit to the truth and do penance.

2. If, by the last supper, we understand holy communion, then the poor, the feeble, the blind, and the lame, and those in the highways and hedges, are those who consider themselves poor, feeble, and wretched—those who are humble of heart. They are convinced of their misery and wretchedness, and know that they are full of imperfections and faults; that left to themselves and depending on themselves, they are not able to persevere in righteousness and in the way of virtue, and cannot make the least progress; hence joyfully they follow the invitation to holy communion, in order to unite themselves with Christ, and to obtain strength to do what is right. Oh, how fortunate ought we not to deem ourselves in having frequent opportunities of approaching the holy altar! How zealously ought we not to avail ourselves of them so that we may frequently partake of the unspeakable grace of holy communion!

PERORATION.

Concluding our meditation, let us consider the words of Christ: *I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.* God gives graces in abundance to all men that they may work out their salvation. Woe to those who despise these graces; God leaves them to their fate, and their end is destruction! Thus the Jews, although the gospel was preached to them with great signs and wonders, persevered in unbelief and sin, and were rejected. Thus many Christian nations, because they knew not how to appreciate the grace of Christianity, but sank deeper and deeper into sin and vice, were abandoned by God, lost the holy faith, and perished. Thus also in our day God withdraws his graces from those who do not honor their Mother, the Catholic Church, but despise her means of grace, and make common cause with her enemies. Their end will be destruction. That we may be found worthy of participating in the great supper of the elect in heaven, let us never forget that the mercy of God in regard to whole nations, as well as to individual persons, has its limits.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.—*Luke* 14: 16.

By the great supper, of which the gospel of this day speaks, many Fathers of the Church understand the Most Holy Eucharist. In this sense the Church also interprets it, and therefore this gospel is particularly appropriate to-day—the Sunday within the Octave of the feast of Corpus Christi. The holy Eucharist is, indeed, a great supper: great, *on account of Jesus*, who instituted it; great, *on account of the food* which is given; great, *on account of the multitude of the guests;* great, *on account of its wonderful effects*, for it obtains for us eternal life, according to the words of our Lord: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life."—*John* 6: 55. I shall speak to you to-day of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, and explain to you—

I. That Jesus Christ is really present;
II. How he is present in this Sacrament.

Part I.

The Council of Trent says: "If any one denies that in the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ; but says that he is therein as a sign, or in figure, or by his virtue, let him be anathema."—*Sess.* 13, *can.* 1. It is, therefore, a Catholic dogma that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Blessed Eucharist, just as it is a Catholic dogma that he once sojourned upon earth and now sits at the right hand of his Father. The truth of this doctrine is proved—

1. *From the Sacred Scripture.*

(*a.*) About a year before Christ instituted the Blessed Eucharist he promised that he would give his flesh and blood for a nourishment, when he said to the Jews: "I am the living bread,

which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world."—*John* 6: 51, 52. When the Jews could not comprehend how he could give them his flesh to eat, our Saviour left them in this embarrassment, and did not tell them that they had misunderstood his words, but, on the contrary, only emphasized them the more, saying: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." His Apostles being scandalized at his words, he said to them: "Will you also go away?" meaning thereby: I will not retract my words, though you all should leave me, for I will indeed give you my flesh to eat and my blood to drink.—*John* 6: 54-68.

(*b.*) What Christ had promised he really fulfilled at the last supper. The three Evangelists, St. Matthew (26), St. Mark (14), and St. Luke (22), and also St. Paul, perfectly and unanimously agree in the narration of the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, saying that Christ took bread and wine and said: "Take ye and eat, this is my body: drink ye all of this, this is my blood." Christ, then, says in plain words that what he gives his Apostles to eat and to drink is not bread and wine, but his flesh and blood.

(*c.*) That Jesus Christ is really present in the Blessed Eucharist St. Paul testifies in several passages. Thus he says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?"—*I. Cor.* 10: 16. "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord . . . He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord (from common food)." *I. Cor.* 11: 27, 29. This demonstrates the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ, even if the communicant be unworthy, for otherwise he could not be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, or be justly condemned for not discerning the Lord's body.

2. *From Tradition.* The Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist was believed and taught in the whole Christian Church for a thousand years, without any objection whatever being raised against this dogma. Berengarius of Tours, who lived in the eleventh century, was the first to deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist; he afterwards retracted his error and died penitent.

The Fathers of the Church without an exception re-echo the language of the Apostle, by proclaiming the Real Presence in the Eucharist. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century), instructing the Catechmens, observes; "He himself having declared, *this is my body*, who from henceforward shall dare to doubt? And he having said, *this is my blood*, who shall ever doubt, saying: 'This is not his blood.' He once at Cana turned water into wine, which is akin to blood, and is he undeserving of belief when he turned wine into blood?" St. Augustine (fifth century), addressing the newly-baptized, says: "I promised you a discourse wherein I would explain the Sacrament of the Lord's Table, which Sacrament you even now behold and of which you were last night made partakers. You ought to know what you have received. The bread which you see on the altar, after being sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That chalice, after being sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ.,'

Every Christian community throughout the world, with the sole exception of Protestants, proclaims its belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. Thus the Nestorians and Eutychians, who separated from the Catholic Church in the fifth century, admit the Real Presence in the Sacrament. Such also is the faith of the Greek Church, which seceded from us over a thousand years ago, as well as of the present Russian Church. And such is the belief of the schismatic Copts, the Syrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, in short, of all the Oriental sects no longer in communion with the See of Rome. It is therefore an incontrovertible truth that the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament has always been in the Church, and that from the time of the Apostles down to the present day it has existed without any interruption.

3. *From the most ancient discipline of the Church.* The first Christians celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass and holy communion so secretly that the Jews and Gentiles and even the Catechumens were excluded therefrom. This was done in order to prevent all desecration of this most holy Sacrament. Nevertheless, the Gentiles obtained a confused knowledge of it, for they asserted that the Christians at their meetings killed a child and ate its flesh and drank its blood. From the custom of the Church of celebrating the last Supper secretly, and the reproach of the Gentiles, that the Christians at their meetings ate human flesh, it is evident beyond a doubt that the Christians of those days believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. If it had been the faith of the Christians that in the Sacrament only bread and wine are received in memory of Jesus Christ, there would have been no necessity for keeping this doctrine so

secret, and the Gentiles could never possibly have accused them of eating human flesh and drinking human blood.

PART II.

How is Christ present in the Sacrament of the Altar? He is present—

1. *Under the appearance of bread and wine.* As soon as in holy mass the words of the consecration are pronounced over the bread and wine, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. Consequently that which after the consecration still appears to be bread and wine is no longer bread and wine, but the true body and the true blood of Christ; of the bread and wine nothing remains but the appearances, that is, what falls under the senses, as form, color, taste, smell. The Catholic doctrine is founded—

(*a.*) *Upon the Sacred Scripture.* Christ did not say at the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Under, or in this bread, is my body; under, or in this wine, is my blood; but, *This is my body, this is my blood.* The natural sense of these words is: That which I hold in my hands and give you is my body; that which is in the chalice is my blood. Before it was bread and wine, but now it is my flesh and blood. From this it necessarily follows that Christ changed bread and wine into his flesh and blood, and that he is really present under the appearances of bread and wine.

(*b.*) *Upon Tradition.* St. Cyprian says: "The bread which Jesus Christ gave to his disciples was changed, not in its form or outward appearance, but in its own substance, and became flesh by the omnipotence of the Word." St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "Is he who turned water into wine undeserving of belief, when he turns wine into blood? Under the appearance of bread he gives us his body, and under the appearance of wine his blood." St. Gregory of Nyssa, observes: "We all believe the truth that the bread which the priest sanctifies by the word of God becomes the flesh of the Son of God. This is the effect of the powerful blessing which changed the substance of the bread into the body and the blood of the Lord." St. Augustine says: "That which was bread, before the holy words of consecration were pronounced over it, is no longer bread after the benediction, but is the body of the Lord."

Therefore the Church has rejected the assertion of those false teachers, that the body and the blood of Christ are present in

the Eucharist conjointly with bread and wine, as a heresy, and declares that the whole substance of the bread is changed into the body, and that the whole substance of the wine is changed into the blood of Christ; the species only of the bread and wine remaining.—*Con. Trid. Sess.* 13, *can.*2. And this change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ the Catholic Church most aptly calls *Transubstantiation.*

2. *Under each form, under the species of bread as well as under the species of wine, and in every, even the smallest particle, of each form, whole and undivided, as he is whole and undivided in heaven.*

(*a.*) The truth that Christ is present whole and undivided under each form has its reason in this, that Jesus Christ in the Eucharist *is not dead, but living.* When the *Apostles* communicated at the Last Supper, they received Christ, who then lived upon earth, under the appearance of bread and wine; when *we* communicate we receive the same Christ, who now reigns in heaven; it is always the living Christ that is present in the Eucharist. But if Christ is present in the Sacrament living, his flesh and blood and soul must be united; for a living man has a body, which consists of flesh and blood and is united with a soul. From this it follows that Christ as man is present under the appearance of bread as well as of wine. Christ, however, is not only man but also God; his Divinity remains for ever united with his humanity. Now, since as man he is present under each form, he must, for the reason that his Divinity and humanity are inseparably united, be present under each form with his Divinity and humanity, or as the whole and undivided Christ.

(*b.*) *Christ is present whole and undivided in every, even the smallest, part of the appearances of bread and wine.* It is of no consequence whether the hosts are large or small, whether they are broken into many parts or not, the whole Christ is always present. The breaking or division of the Sacred Host concerns only the appearances, but not Christ, for Christ cannot be broken or divided, because he is present with a glorified body as he now sits in heaven at the right hand of his Father—consequently he is present inviolable, incorruptible and immortal.

3. *As long as the appearances of bread and wine continue to exist.* The Sacrament of the Altar is entirely independent of the reception, for it does not consist in this, but in the Real Presence of Christ. The Sacrament of the Altar essentially differs from all the other sacraments. These do not exist before their reception; they are only perfected by the reception, but the Sacrament of the Altar already exists before the reception and outside of it,

for it is perfected by the consecration. When we communicate, we receive a Sacrament already prepared, as the food we eat is already prepared. Therefore, because the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist does not depend on the reception, he is present whether it is preserved in the tabernacle, or exposed for public adoration, or carried about in solemn procession, or borne as Viaticum to the sick. If Christ had limited his Presence to the actual reception of this Sacrament, he should have said: "Take ye and eat; this will become my body when you receive it." But he did not say so, but "Take ye and eat, this *is* my body." The body of Christ therefore was already present, it did exist before the Apostles received it; and if they had not received it, it would still have been present in virtue of the words of Christ. The Apostles were not to eat in order that it *might become* the body of Christ but *because it was* the body of Christ. Christ then remains in the Holy Eucharist as long as the appearances continue to exist. This was the doctrine of the Church from the beginning.

PERORATION.

Rejoice that our Lord and Saviour is pleased to remain in the Blessed Sacrament amongst us to the end of the world. Thank him for this exceedingly great favor, love him, and visit him often and with devotion. Pour out all your hearts before this loving Comforter and have full confidence in his help; for he himself invites you, saying: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. Vow to Jesus, really present in the Blessed Sacrament, your love, obedience, and fidelity, and do what is pleasing to him, that after this life you may be united with him for ever in heaven. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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4. LITURGICA SKETCH.

THE CEREMONIES OF HOLY COMMUNION.

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.—Luke 14: 16.

The great supper spoken of in the gospel of this day is the Church of Christ. We may also, with many fathers of the Church,

understand thereby holy communion. It was pride, avarice, and impurity that caused so many Jews to refuse the invitation of our Lord to enter into his Church; it is the same vices that keep many Christians from holy communion. Some being proud, others being absorbed in their temporal affairs, and others again being the victims of lust, they have lost all desire for higher things, and, like the Israelites longing for the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt, despise the heavenly Manna. Woe to those Christians who will not hear of holy communion; to them the words of our Lord in the gospel of this day apply: *But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.* To encourage you to approach the holy altar as often as possible and always well prepared, I shall speak to you to-day of the ceremonies of holy communion, that is, of the ceremonies—

I. Before Communion;
II. At Communion;
III. After Communion.

PART I.

In the early ages of the Church all the faithful who were present at mass communicated with the celebrating priest. Afterwards when the fervor of the Christians grew cold, and most of them no longer communicated so frequently, the communion of the faithful during mass fell more and more into disuse; but they went to communion before or after mass, as the circumstances allowed or required. Concerning the ceremonies before communion, they are the same, whether it is given before or after mass, or at any other time.

1. If the priest gives communion during mass or immediately after it, he uses the same vestments as at mass. If he gives communion at any other time he must be vested in surplice and stole, and two wax candles must be lighted. The stole must not be black, but of the color of the day, because black reminds us of death; but Christ promises resurrection and life everlasting to those who worthily receive him.—*John* 6: 55. In accordance with a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, June 27th, 1868, communion may be given in black vestments in masses which are said in black, immediately before or after mass. The two wax candles recall to our minds Jesus Christ, the light of the world, who enlightens both Jews and Gentiles; as well as the love of God and of our neighbor, which is to burn in our hearts when we receive holy communion.

2. Whilst the priest takes the *Ciborium* out of the tabernacle and places it upon the altar, on which a corporal must be spread,

the server says the *Confiteor* in the name of the communicants. The *Confiteor* is a public confession of sin, in which we confess ourselves sinners before God, before Mary, the angels and saints, and the priest; and then turning to Mary, to the angels and saints and to the priest, we pray that they may obtain for us grace and pardon from God. The *Confiteor* was not said formerly, when the faithful communicated during mass, because it had already been said by the priest and the people at the beginning of mass. The custom of saying it immediately before communion dates back to the time when the faithful began to receive outside mass, from the thirteenth century. Whilst the *Confiteor* is being said, you ought interiorly to humble yourselves and make an act of contrition, for a humble and contrite heart God will not despise.

3. After the *Confiteor*, the priest turns to the communicants, and says: *May Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. R. Amen. May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution and remission of your sins. R. Amen.* These prayers are called the "general absolution," and they come immediately after the *Confiteor*. In the *Confiteor* the communicants acknowledge themselves sinners, and ask the priest to intercede and mediate with God for them, hence the priest prays that God in his mercy may forgive them all their sins, that they may with a pure heart receive the Bread of Angels.

4. The priest then takes a Host, holds it over the Ciborium, and with his face turned to the people says: *Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world.*—*John* 1: 29. Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, hence St. Peter writes: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—*I. Peter* 1: 18, 19. What joy and consolation must it have been for the multitudes when John pointed out Jesus to them and declared that he was the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world! These feelings of joy and consolation must also be awakened in us when the priest shows the sacred Host and says: *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.* For we can say with truth: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was nailed to the cross, now comes to us, to give us the fruit of Redemption, and to make us partake of his divine nature.

5. The priest then says in the words used by the centurion: *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.* If you have a living faith, as the centurion had, you will like him humble yourselves

most profoundly before Jesus and consider yourselves unworthy to receive him into your heart, but his words: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* 11: 28), will inspire you with courage to approach the table of the Lord, notwithstanding your insignificance and unworthiness. The priest thrice repeats the words, *Lord, I am not worthy*, etc., for the more we humble ourselves before Jesus, and the more we place our confidence in him, the more abundant graces we may expect from him.

Part II.

In the early days of Christianity the Sacrament of the Altar was administered in a somewhat different manner from that now in vogue.

1. As already obssrved, the faithful communicated during mass. The moment of communion having arrived, the deacon turned towards the people saying: *Holy things to the holy*. This was an earnest admonition to the communicants to receive the holy Eucharist with a pure heart. The people received communion at the railing, which was in front of the sanctuary. None except the clergy were allowed to communicate within the sanctuary, or at the altar. Even to-day it is against the rules of the Church for lay people to receive communion at the altar; they should receive outside the sanctuary, at the communion rails.

2. Formerly communion was given under both species, first under the species of bread, with the words: *The body of Christ, or, The body of the Lord*; then under the species of wine, with the words: *The blood of Christ,* or, *The blood of Christ, the chalice of life.* The communicants responded, *Amen*, whereby they expressed their belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. The sacred Host was given to the communicants, not upon the tongue, but upon the hand. The women were afterwards allowed to take the sacred Host upon the hand covered with a white linen cloth. After the reception of the sacred Host the Precious Blood was given them. They drank it either out of the chalice, which the deacon handed them, or by means of a silver (afterwards gold) tube attached to the chalice. The communion under both species, however, took place only during mass; it was not commanded, but only commended and left to every one's choice. Outside mass they received only the sacred Host, as we do at present. In the twelfth century communion under one species became universal. But some heretics raising objections against the Catholic doctrine, and asserting that by receiving under one species the whole Christ was not

received, the Church condemned this heresy at the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, and made communion under one form a general law.

3. At present the faithful receive communion in the same place as did the Christians of the early times, at the communion rails, which separate the sanctuary from the nave of the Church. When you go to the communion rails, your whole deportment ought faithfully to reflect the feelings of your heart, faith, adoration, humility, contrition, and fervent desire. Kneel down, hold the cloth over your hands and under your chin, so that the sacred Host may not fall upon the floor and be desecrated; hold the head erect and firm, extend the tongue a little upon the under lip, and then most reverently receive the sacred Host. Do not keep it in your mouth until it is quite dissolved, but let it moisten a little upon the tongue, and then swallow it. Should it adhere to the palate, remove it gently with the tongue and not with your fingers. When the priest gives you the sacred Host, he makes with it the sign of the cross, saying: *May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting. Amen.* The sign of the cross signifies that the sacred Host is Jesus Christ, who offered himself for us on the cross, and that the communicant receives Jesus Christ and with him the fruit of the sacrifice of the cross. The words which the priest says signify the principal effect of communion, which consists in this, that it nourishes and strengthens our soul and is a pledge of life everlasting.

PART III.

After receiving holy communion, retire with the greatest modesty to your place and spend some time in fervent prayer. No time being more precious and more favorable for obtaining graces than that which immediately follows holy communion, avail yourselves of it in the best manner you can. It would indeed be a bad sign if we could not for half an hour, or at least for fifteen minutes, entertain Christ, our Divine Guest, who has taken up his abode with us. The prayers which we ought especially to say after holy communion are those in which we humble ourselves before our Lord, thank him, offer up ourselves to him, express our love and implore his graces. Renew your purpose of amendment and pray to God for the grace of a holy and happy death. Spend the day of communion as far as possible in pious exercises, avoiding worldly diversions and amusements. Go to church in the afternoon or evening, read a spiritual book, visit a sick person, console the afflicted, and practise as well as you can the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

PERORATION.

I have now given you the necessary explanation of the ceremonies of holy communion. All these are an admonition to you to conduct yourselves before, at, and after communion in such a manner as the infinite holiness of this action requires. Prepare yourselves for every communion with the greatest care; never approach the altar except with a pure heart, and with the greatest veneration and devotion. Jesus having taken possession of your heart, be all devotion, humility, and love, and exclaim with the spouse in the Canticles: "I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him and I will not let him go."—3 : 4. Offer yourselves to him, body and soul, and vow to him loyalty and obedience. Pray that God may bless your good resolutions and keep you in his grace. Blessed are you if you always communicate in such a manner; you will advance from virtue to virtue, persevere in grace to the end, and be united with Jesus for ever in heaven. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

HEAVEN, A GREAT SUPPER.

A certain man made a great supper.—Luke 14: 16.

In the Old Testament we read of a banquet with which probably no other can be compared. It is the feast which the Persian king Assuerus made in the third year of his reign, in the city of Susan, the capital of his kingdom, and which he continued for one hundred and eighty days, that he might show the riches and the glory of his kingdom, and the greatness of his power. He invited all the princes, the most mighty of the Persians, and the nobles of the Medes, and the governors of the provinces. When the days of the feast were expired, he invited all the people that were found in Susan, from the greatest to the least: and commanded a feast to be made seven days. And there were hung up on every side sky-colored, and green, and violet hangings, fastened with cords of silk, and of purple, which were put into rings of ivory, and were held up with marble pillars. The couches also were

of gold and silver, placed in order upon a floor paved with porphyry and white marble which was embellished with painting of wonderful variety. And they that were invited drank in golden cups, and the meats were brought in divers vessels one after another. Wine also in abundance, and of the best was presented, as was worthy of a king's magnificence.—*Esther* 1.

Superb and unique in its kind as this feast was, I know one that transcends it in magnificence and splendor—it is that of which we read in the gospel of this day: *A certain man made a great supper.* By this great supper we may aptly understand heaven; for heaven is often represented in the Sacred Scripture under the figure of a banquet. Therefore heaven—a great banquet, shall be the subject of my discourse to-day.

I. Heaven is a great banquet;
II. Heaven is a supper.

PART I.

Heaven is *a great banquet*—

1. *On account of the guests.*

(*a.*) *Who are they:* First, *all the saints,* the patriarchs and the prophets, and apostles and martyrs, the confessors, the virgins and the widows. It is certain that the least saint in heaven possesses a higher dignity and a greater power than any potentate on earth. If we could see a saint in heaven in the full splendor of his glory, we should not be able to endure the sight, and if we did not know that he was only a human being, we should imagine him to be God. Secondly, *all the angels* with their nine choirs. What glorious beings are the angels! How far do they surpass in beauty, power, and all gifts the nature of men! The Prophet Daniel saw by the river Tigris "a man clothed in linen and his loins were girded with the finest gold, and his body was like the chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp; and his arms, and all downward even to the feet, like in appearance to glittering brass; and the voice of his word like the voice of a multitude." And seing this great vision, "there remained no strength in him," and he "fainted away, and lay in a consternation upon his face."—*Dan.* 10: 5, 9. This was only an assumed appearance, a vision of an angel, what then must the real angels be? Thirdly, *Mary,* the Queen of all the angels and saints, who, in dignity and holiness, beauty and glory far surpasses them all, she being the Mother of God, whereas they are only the servants of God. Lastly, *God himself,* the Holy, the Triune, in his infinite glory. Oh, what a grand banquet is

heaven, where such guests sit at table! How miserable are all banquets on earth when compared with this, because only mortal men, infected with divers faults and infirmities, are the participants!

(*b.*) *How great is the number of the guests?* Imagine the United States of America from Maine to Louisiana, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean to be one great hall, full of tables and chairs, and all the seats occupied, how great would be the number of the guests! But you must know that heaven is larger than the United States, and, forming one dining-hall, you may imagine approximatively how great the number of the guests must be. Count these guests for me, and I will count for you the stars which on a clear winter night twinkle in the heavens. St. John was favored with a glance into heaven, and saw there so many saints that no one could number them.—*Apoc.* 7 : 9. As is generally supposed, the third part of the angels rebelled against God and were cast into hell. According to another supposition just so many souls will be saved as are required to make up the number of the fallen angels; therefore the number of the good angels is twice as great as that of the saints. Now if there are already so many saints in heaven that they cannot be counted, how great must be the number of the angels! What a great banquet then is heaven, comprising such an immense number of guests! And if in the society of a good friend who loves us truly and sincerely, and whom we love in the same manner, we feel so happy, what will be our feelings in heaven in company with so many millions and millions of angels and saints, who will be of one heart and soul with us, yes, in the society of God himself, our heavenly Father, who loves us more dearly than any human father loved his only child!

2. *On account of the meats that are set before the guests.* When a mighty potentate of this world makes a feast, nothing common and ordinary is put on the table, everything is exceedingly good, rare and expensive, for the host takes a pride in treating his guests to the best things. But is a princely banquet to be compared with the feast in heaven? St. Paul, who was favored with a view of this heavenly banquet in his lifetime, could only exclaim: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—*I. Cor.* 2 : 9. The meat and drink which God the Father will set before his children are so precious that no one ever saw, heard, or tasted the like; the saints, as the Psalmist says, "will be inebriated with the plenty of the house of God, and God will make them drink of the torrent of his pleasure."—*Ps.* 35 : 9. Hence St. Alphonsus observes: If horses knew that their master

was going to make a great feast for them, they would imagine that the banquet would consist of nothing but good hay and oats, for of any other food they have no idea. As horses cannot comprehend the precious meats and drinks of a banquet, so we can form no adequate idea of the heavenly banquet. The greatest delicacies and dainties of a royal banquet when compared with those of the heavenly banquet are nothing but hay and oats. Oh, who would not sacrifice everything in order to partake of this banquet even for one day, one day in the house of God being better than thousands in the tabernacles of sinners (in all the joys, pleasures and amusements of the world).—*Ps.* 83: 11.

3. *On account of the duration.* How long will the banquet in heaven last? Perhaps a few hours, as a banquet on earth? Or one hundred and eighty days, as that of king Assuerus? Oh, no; it will last longer, infinitely longer, for ever. And this very circumstance that the heavenly banquet will be of everlasting duration makes it a perfect, unspeakable, delightful banquet of felicity. Should the saints be obliged to leave this heavenly banquet sooner or later, though it might be after thousands of years, they could never really enjoy it, for the thought of the end of the banquet would sting them to the heart, and they would say to themselves: Though splendidly as we are now entertained, the time will come when all will have an end for us. Truly, such thoughts would be as drops of wormwood in the chalice of their joy. But no, ye blessed ones in heaven, such a thought can never sadden your hearts: for God, the eternal, infallible Truth, assures you that you shall remain at his table as his most beloved children and guests for a never-ending eternity.

PART II.

Heaven is *a supper*—

1. *Because the work of the day must precede it.*

(*a.*) You all know the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. —*Matt.* 20. "When evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire." Those who remained in the market-place received nothing in the evening. Here, then, the important truth is proclaimed that heaven is a reward, which will be given only to those who have served God diligently. This truth is also inculcated in the parable of the talents.—*Matt.* 25. Two of the servants made good use of the talents which they had received, and these the Lord praised and said to each of them: "Enter thou into the joy of thy

Lord." But the third servant who buried his talent, and squandered his time without endeavoring to reap any profit, the Lord called an unprofitable servant and commanded that he should be cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. In ancient Rome every one who wished to become a citizen was compelled to show his hands before a magistrate; if he had rough hands, hardened by labor, citizenship was granted to him as a laborious and industrious man, but if he had hands as tender and delicate as those of a lady he was rejected as an idle, worthless fellow. Thus God will deal with every one of us when we appear before his tribunal. We must let him see our hands. If they show that we have labored diligently he will invite us to the supper, but if we have stood idle all the day, that is all our lifetime, he will pronounce over us the sentence of condemnation: "Depart from me." Here and hereafter the words of the Apostle are applicable: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." —*II. Thess.* 3: 10.

(*b.*) What kind of work must we do in order to be invited to the heavenly supper? We must chiefly practise mortification or self-denial, for Christ says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 24. In consequence of original sin we all have a natural propensity to evil; concupiscence allures us now to this, now to that sin, and renders every exercise of virtue or devotion more or less difficult. There is then the necessity for continual mortification, that we may persevere. The saints were well aware of this, and you cannot name a single one who did not practise mortification. Thus St. Paul says of himself: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away."—*I. Cor.* 9: 27. We read that Abraham was ready to sacrifice his only son for the love of God. What he was prepared and willing to do, we must do all the days of our lives. We must mortify ourselves, put off the old man, and destroy the sinful body, which is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. We are priests and victims, and must every day and every hour lay our Isaac—our sensual inclinations—upon the altar and slaughter them with the sacrificial knife of mortification. This is the first and most necessary work that we must do, in order to render ourselves worthy to partake of the heavenly supper.

A labor no less necessary is the *diligent practice of the Christian virtues and good works.* The whole life of Christ upon earth was an uninterrupted practice of virtues and good works. What a sublime example does he not give us of the love of God and of our neighbor, of humility, meekness and patience, of con-

tempt for the world, and of all works of mercy! If we desire to be true disciples of Jesus and to be admitted to his presence in heaven, we must become conformable to him, for "whom he (God) foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren."—*Rom.* 8: 29. Let us then endeavor, as long as we live, to become more and more conformable to our Saviour in all virtues.

A third labor is the *performance of our religious duties*, the first of which is *prayer*. He who does not pray refuses to God, his Lord and Creator, the veneration and adoration due to him; he places himself on the side of the rebellious angels, and like them, is rejected. He who does not pray neglects the most necessary means of salvation: he resembles a poor, helpless man who perishes in his misery because out of pride and stubborness he cannot resolve to ask others for help. How miserable are Christians who do not pray; and the same may be said of the hearing of the word of God and the reception of the holy sacraments. If any one shows himself careless in this regard, he gives plainly to understand that he is dead to God, and he may promise himself anything but participation in the heavenly supper. How do matters stand with you?

A fourth labor is the *faithful performance of the duties of our state of life.* It is the will of God that every one should do what his state of life requires of him. If you are a superior, father, mother, master, or mistress, see that your children and servants lead a good life, and avoid sin. If you are a child, a servant, you must obey your superiors, not only in things which regard your temporal welfare, but also in those which regard the salvation of your soul. If you are rich, you must give alms out of your abundance; if you are poor, you must bear your poverty patiently.

2. *Because there is no labor after it.*

(*a.*) There are several meals during the day, breakfast, luncheon and dinner; these meals are for the purpose of satisfying hunger and thirst and obtaining fresh strength for your work. But it is not so with supper; after it all work ceases; the labors of the day are over, and people go to rest.

Such a supper is heaven. If ever we are so fortunate as to get there we shall see the fulfilment of the adage: Rest is sweet after labor. In heaven there is no temptation, no contest: all the enemies of our salvation. who made our life so bitter and prepared so many dangers for us, are overcome: all labors and pains which we were obliged to endure in the service of God are over; all mortifications are ended; all sufferings and trials have ceased, and even death has no longer any power over us. When the

heavenly Father has assembled his dear children at his table he will "wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away."—*Apoc.* 21: 4.

(*b.*) Let us imagine to ourselves the felicity of our glorified brothers and sisters in heaven. What a happiness must it be to be able to say: Now all contest, all danger, all misery is over for ever; now I need no longer dread the loss of my God and heaven, now I am in everlasting security! Oh, this joy and felicity may be imagined, but there are no words to express it. From this follows a very important lesson for us. Let us not expect heaven upon earth. Let us not seek this supper on earth, but in heaven. He who gives full scope to his passions here will hereafter share the lot of Dives, who is burning in the flames of hell-fire and does not receive even a drop of water wherewith to cool his parched tongue. There is only one heaven, and that is not here below, but above. Let us then bear the heat and the burden of the day, that we may hereafter partake of the heavenly supper.

PERORATION.

To this supper all of us are called; we are destined to go to heaven and to enjoy an eternal felicity with the angels and saints. Let us appreciate this grace of our vocation. Let us not imitate those who were first invited, but who made various excuses and rejected the invitation to the supper. Let us not be deluded by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, or the pride of life, lest we neglect our salvation and seek our happiness in the false joys and fleeting pleasures of sin. Let us rather take the poor, the feeble, the blind and the lame for a pattern, cheerfully following our divine Saviour, who requires us to take the cross upon ourselves and to follow him, that we may one day be invited to the great supper in heaven. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

6. MORAL SKETCH.

WHY DID JESUS INSTITUTE THE BLESSED EUCHARIST?

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.—*Luke* 14: 16.

The Church does not limit the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi to one day only, but continues it for eight days, an Octave, during which she celebrates the mass of the Blessed Sacrament on all days on which no greater feast falls. This celebration of Corpus Christi for the space of eight days is ordained that we may more fully consider the wonderful mystery of the Sacrament of the Altar and more firmly resolve to pay becoming homage to it and apply its graces to our souls. The Church in the gospel of this day directs our attention to the Blessed Eucharist, bringing it before us under the picture of a great supper. I shall avail myself this morning of the opportunity of speaking to you of this adorable Sacrament and of answering for you the question: Why did Christ institute this Sacrament? He instituted it—

I. To favor us always with his presence;
II. To offer himself up daily for us;
III. To nourish our souls for eternal life.

PART I.

1. Our Divine Saviour, in his infinite love, invented a means by which he could dwell among us after his Ascension: and this means is the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. For in this Sacrament he is, as our faith teaches us, truly present, not only as God, but also as man. The same Christ is here present who once walked upon earth and who now sits in heaven on the right hand of God, his Father. He fully accomplished his promise in this Sacrament: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—*Matt.* 28: 20. The people who lived in the days of Christ and saw him walk in their midst had no advantage over us, for the same Jesus is still living amongst us upon earth, under the mysterious species of bread and wine. Nay, we are in a certain sense more highly favored than the contemporaries of Christ, for they often had much labor and inconvenience in order to come to him, and, on account of the multi-

tude that followed him, it could be done but rarely. What a long and painful journey were the wise men from the East obliged to make to adore Jesus! Zacheus was compelled to climb upon a sycamore tree to see him; the people in the desert could tarry with him only three days and then were obliged to leave him. We can come to him more easily, for he is in every Catholic church. We can visit him every hour and remain with him as long as we please.

2. *And why is he present in the Sacrament of the Altar?* Because he loves us and it is his pleasure and delight to be with the children of men and to do good to them. During his mortal life he did good to all; he instructed the ignorant, consoled the afflicted, received sinners, healed the sick, cast out devils, and raised the dead to life. What he was once in his mortal life, he continues to be in this Sacrament, a God of love, a Dispenser of all graces. In this Sacrament he has his hands full of graces, and seeks to whom he may distribute them. From the tabernacle he unceasingly cries out to us: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28.

3. Christ being truly present in this Sacrament in order to impart to us his graces, *should we not go to him with a willing and joyful heart, to adore him and ask graces of him?* How zealous were the saints! It was before the Blessed Sacrament that St. Francis Xavier recruited his strength after the labors and fatigues which he had to endure in his missionary labors and journeys in India. St. Francis Regis, sometimes finding the church locked, remained kneeling in the rain and cold, it being a consolation to him to be able to adore Jesus from a distance. St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia was accustomed to visit the Blessed Sacrament in the churches during the night, and there to persevere for hours in prayer. Imitate those saints and visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as often as possible, adore him, thank him for all graces and benefits, atone for the many insults offered to him in the Blessed Sacrament, present to him your difficulties and ask him for the graces you stand in need of. Employ especially Sundays and holidays for these visits. It is certainly not asking too much to request you on these days to remain for half an hour or at least fifteen minutes in fervent prayer before the tabernacle. Consider that the hours spent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament are the most precious and most profitable of your life, and will afford you sweet consolation on your deathbed and in eternity.

PART II.

1. Christ also instituted the Blessed Sacrament *in order to offer himself up daily for us*. What he once did on the cross, where he immolated himself in a bloody manner for us, he does daily in holy mass, where, by the hands of the priest, he offers himself up in an unbloody manner. The sacrifice of the mass is as profitable as the sacrifice of the cross; because Christ in both is the priest and victim. On the cross Christ offered himself in order to redeem us: in the mass he offers himself in order to represent to us his sacrifice of the cross and to apply to us the fruit of Redemption.

2. The holy sacrifice of the mass enables us *perfectly to comply with our duties and obligations towards God*.

(*a*.) Our first duty is *to pay homage to God and adore him*. Infinite honor is due to God, our Lord. But such an honor we cannot give him of ourselves, because, being creatures, we can do nothing that has an infinite value. The holy sacrifice of the mass supplies our inefficiency. If we hear mass devoutly we give God a greater honor than all the angels and saints can give him: for great as they are, they are only creatures and cannot pay an infinite homage to God: but in holy mass we offer to God Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, consubstantial with him, and therefore we give honor of infinite value.

(*b*.) Our second duty is *to thank God for his countless graces and benefits*. This too we are unable to do of ourselves, because the grace of God, especially the grace of Redemption, is of infinite value. Again it is holy mass that enables us to thank God worthily. In holy mass we do not offer to God an earthly and finite gift, but his only-begotten Son, and in such a way perfectly comply with our duty of thanksgiving.

(*c*.) A third duty is that being sinners *we must reconcile ourselves with God*. This again we cannot do of ourselves: for sin, being an offense against God, is an infinite evil, and consequently requires a satisfaction of infinite value, which we cannot make. But in the sacrifice of the mass, through which the infinite merits of Christ continually flow to us, we can make most perfect satisfaction to God and reconcile ourselves with him. We also obtain by holy mass, if we hear it with the right disposition, all graces necessary for a true repentance. It is moreover on account of the sacrifice of the mass that God is so indulgent and merciful towards the sinful world and does not chastise it as it deserves.

(*d.*) Lastly, a fourth duty is to ask grace of God. But will God hear, since we have offended him in so many ways and have evinced the basest ingratitude for the benefits received from him? In the holy mass we have a most powerful means of obtaining all benefits from him; for here Christ offers himself up for us to induce his heavenly Father to be propitious to us and to aid us in our necessities. How could the heavenly Father refuse his Son when he offers himself up to Him? how could he reject our petitions when his Son presents them before his throne?

3. The holy mass being so profitable and acceptable a sacrifice, it follows *that you should hear it as often as possible.* The primitive Christians daily assembled for the celebration of the holy mysteries—the mass.—*Acts* 2: 46. After the time of the Apostles the Christians still showed how much they valued mass, and during the persecutions they risked their lives in order to hear it. Christians who have been solicitous for their salvation have at all times heard mass with the same fervor. St. Louis king of France, heard daily two, sometimes three, and even four masses. Blessed Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England, although burdened with the cares and labors of state, never let a day pass without hearing mass.

Hear mass on week-days as often as you can. Those are lukewarm Christians who in the morning instead of going to mass lie in bed or take a walk. Always hear mass with true devotion. Collect your thoughts at the beginning and beg of God the grace of worthily offering it with the priest. But particularly renew your attention at the three principal parts of the mass, the Offertory, Consecration, and Communion, and guard your eyes, that you may preserve yourselves from distractions. After mass go home, resolving to spend the whole day and your whole life for the honor of God and the salvation of your soul.

Part III.

1. Jesus instituted the Blessed Sacrament *for the nourishment of our souls unto life everlasting.* For this reason he said: "Take ye and eat, this is my body. . . . Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament."—*Matt.* 26: 26-28. Previously he had said: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."—*John* 6: 54. Not content with giving us his graces, to be outside of us, he wishes to enter into our hearts, and to dwell there, and to be, as it were, one with us. Therefore he says: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."—*John* 6: 57. Christ being the source and dispenser of grace, we receive in holy communion, not, as in the other sacraments, only individual graces, but the plentitude, the Author of

graces. For this reason, as the Roman Catechism says, it is impossible to describe the immense advantages and innumerable fruits of holy communion. It is impossible to count the rays of the sun, neither can we count the graces which Jesus, the Sun of justice, infuses into the hearts of those who receive him worthily. Holy communion especially increases sanctifying grace, weakens our evil inclinations, gives us strength to practise virtue, and is to us a pledge of a glorious resurrection and eternal life.

2. Since Jesus imparts to us so many graces in holy communion, *we must deem ourselves happy to receive him very often.* In the early ages of the Church it was the custom of Christians to communicate with the priest at every mass at which they were present. St. Jerome in the fourth century says that it was customary at Rome in his time for Christians to go to communion at every mass. The Council of Antioch (341) ordained that Christians who hear mass but do not go to communion should be excluded from the Church. Even in later times, when the primitive fervor had grown cold, there were many who several times in the week approached the altar. All the saints whose lives are known, without one single exception had the greatest desire for holy communion and received it as often as possible. The Church at all times urgently recommended frequent communion to her children, and the Council of Trent expresses the desire that at every mass some at least should communicate not only spiritually, but really.

As to you, I do not expect you to go to communion every day, or every week, but I can and must require that you frequently eat the Bread of Life during the year. You should, as a rule, go at least every three months, and all young people of both sexes should go every month, that they may preserve their hearts undefiled from the contaminations of a wicked world and not fall into sin, especially the sin of impurity.

But that you may partake of the graces of holy communion, you must prepare yourselves well for it. Take care that there is no mortal sin on your conscience, for communion in the state of mortal sin is, as you know, a horrible sacrilege. Prove yourselves before every communion and see that you have no voluntary inclination to any sin in your heart. If you find such, detest it from the bottom of your heart, and make a resolution to practise the contrary virtue on every occasion. Cleanse your soul also from venial sins, for the purer you are the more graces you will receive in holy communion. Never omit before every communion to excite acts of faith, hope and charity, contrition, humility, and a desire for union with Jesus in the Sacrament of his love.

PERORATION.

You know now why Jesus instituted the Blessed Eucharist and how you must conduct yourselves towards it. Jesus is all love for us; for this reason he dwells among us under the species of bread and wine. Let us visit him often, adore him and ask of him whatever we need for time and eternity. He is all love for us, therefore he offers himself up for us daily in an unbloody manner on our altars, in order to apply to us the fruits of his sacrifice on the cross. Let us hear mass, not only on Sundays and holidays, but also on week-days as often as we can, with attention and devotion, that we may become sharers of the great graces of this sacrifice. He is all love for us, therefore he wishes in holy communion to unite himself most intimately with us. Let us go frequently and well prepared to the altar, that our souls may be nourished for eternal life. Blessed are we if we love to assist at mass, to receive him in holy communion, to visit him in the tabernacle. We shall then live and die in union with him, and possess him for ever in heaven. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL GOODS.

And they began all at once to make excuse.—Luke 14: 18.

As the gospel of this day tells us, a certain man made a great supper, and invited many. But when the time came for the invited guests to come to the supper, they all began to make excuse, and refused to appear at the banquet. *The first said: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it. I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them. I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* The majority of people nowadays do the same thing. God invites them to his service and promises them heaven as the reward. But many do not accept this gracious invitation; they despise spiritual and heavenly goods, and have no other desire than to enjoy them-

selves, and to possess what the world has and gives. This folly and delusion of the world I intend to explain to you to-day; for this purpose I *shall speak of the difference between temporal and spiritual goods*, and show you how these are distinguished—

I. In their quality;
II. In their acquisition;
III. In their duration.

PART I.

1. The goods of this world are incapable of rendering us truly and permanently happy, but spiritual goods are capable of doing this.

(*a.*) Not all that glitters is gold. Many an apple, outwardly beautiful, hangs on the tree, but inside it will be found a worm which has there made its home. Many a man who at night goes through a forest is attracted by a glittering object which, when examined in the daytime, proves to be nothing but rotten, phosphorescent wood. So it is with temporal and earthly goods. Is a man who possesses great riches, which enable him to procure everything that his heart may desire, perfectly happy and satisfied? Ah, no; his heart is empty whilst his coffers are full. His treasures do not satisfy him; on the contrary, they give him great uneasiness, and cause much solicitude and anxiety. Take another, who occupies an exalted position in society, whom everybody praises, honors, and applauds. Is he happy and contented? No, his honor is only too often a heavy burden; and jealousy, envy, and other passions, which render life bitter and unendurable, are nowhere more frequent than in the higher circles of society. Take another yet, who spends his time in pleasures and amusements and in the gratification of lust; is he happy? By no means; he resembles a man with the dropsy who thirsts the more, the more he drinks. If ever a man possessed all things whatsoever that the world has and can give, it was Solomon; his riches were simply immense; he was honored more than any other man; he drank the chalice of earthly pleasures and lust as no other before him had done; and yet he was not happy, but sighed again and again: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity . . . and vexation of spirit."—*Eccltes.* 1: 2, 17.

(*b.*) It is not so with the *spiritual goods;* these, to which all Christian virtues and good works, the grace of God, prayer and the sacraments belong, satisfy the craving of the heart, and give peace such as the world with all its goods cannot give. Let us take a few examples from life. What joy and consolation does

not the worthy reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist impart! When one who has grievously sinned makes a good and sincere confession and is absolved by the priest, what a heavy load does he not feel removed from his heart! Does he not say: "Oh, I feel happier now than ever before in my life. I would not exchange the joys I now feel for all the goods of the world!" What blessed feelings do not the works of mercy beget? If you have ever aided a sick person, consoled an afflicted, or relieved a forsaken person, either in word or in deed, did you not experience a sweet joy in your heart and did you not feel the truth of the word that "it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive"?—*Acts* 20: 35. And when you kneel down and lift up your hands and heart to God and pray with fervor and devotion, do you not feel consoled, comforted, strengthened and so full of holy joy that no human pleasure can be compared with it? And when you have overcome a violent temptation, how replete with joy is your heart and with what confidence do you look up to God!

2. *Temporal goods are often dangerous; the spiritual, on the contrary, are always useful and salutary.*

(*a.*) The most estimable of all temporal goods is *health.* But how many sacrifice their health to pride, impurity, intemperance, and to other sins and crimes! How many remain impenitent and are not converted because they always enjoy good health! Another temporal good, which most people desire, is *wealth.* But how often does wealth become the source of many aberrations and sins! How often must it serve for the gratification of pride, impurity, intemperance and other passions! How many who in the state of poverty led an honest and Christian life, forgot God when they grew rich; became overbearing and fell into shameful vices! Among temporal goods, honors and dignities also play a great part, and frequently cause a great deal of evil; for they easily lead to pride, uncharitableness towards our neighbor, to injustice, to oppression and many other sins. Had Saul always remained a herdsman, he probably would have preserved humility in his heart and served God; but the royal dignity made him jealous, disobedient to God and plunged him into temporal and eternal perdition. The same may be said of the other temporal goods; they resemble powder and other combustibles which, unless they are handled very carefully, easily explode and cause great damage and loss.

(*b.*) It is not so with spiritual goods: they are always useful and salutary. If by the practice of virtues and good works we acquire merits for heaven, they are merits for eternity; and the

more humble, meek, patient, and merciful we are, the greater is our advantage, since, according to the Apostle, those who sow in blessings shall reap blessings. The oftener we go to confession and holy communion with a heart well prepared, the more we shall be cleansed from the stains of our sins, sanctified, and enabled to overcome all temptations and to advance in virtue. And how salutary is prayer when performed with fervor and devotion! It is the key to the treasury of heaven, it ennobles our heart, strengthens us in temptations, gives us courage and strength to do all that is good, procures consolation and help in every necessity and obtains for us the grace of final perseverance. The same is true of other spiritual goods; they are profitable to us for time and eternity.

PART II.

Temporal goods differ from spiritual goods *as regard their acquisition.*

1. *Temporal goods oftentimes can not be obtained at all, but spiritual goods always can.*

(*a.*) How many poor people are there who toil early and late, who are saving and economical and strive hard to ameliorate their condition, but all in vain; they cannot extricate themselves from their poverty, they live and die in poverty. How many are there who try every means to obtain a certain office or dignity! But in vain; all their exertions are frustrated and they never attain the object of their ambition. How many sick people are there who leave no remedy untried in order to recover their health, but who nevertheless continue to be ill and whom nothing can cure but the cemetery! Many other people share the same fate: they do their utmost to obtain a certain temporal good, yet all their energy and exertions are fruitless; they resemble children who run over fields and meadows, stones and briers, to the spot where the rainbow seems to touch the earth, in order to get at the beautiful colors, but when they arrive there quite breathless they find nothing.

(*b.*) Spiritual goods, so far as they are necessary and useful for salvation, are easily obtained, if we have a sincere desire for them. If we have frequently and grievously sinned, and have deserved hell more than a thousand times, we must not despair of salvation, for one good and humble confession recovers the grace of God and opens heaven for us. So long as we live we must encounter many things dangerous to salvation, for temptations never cease entirely; but if we watch in prayer, if we are humble,

and lead a retired life, frequently receiving the sacraments, God most assuredly will take us under his protection and keep us in his love and grace to the end. In order to be saved we must practise the Christian virtues, humility, meekness, chastity according to our state, and fraternal charity. This is possible with the assistance of God; we need only make use of the means with which religion furnishes us, and like the saints we shall arrive at virtue and sanctity. Even the first and most necessary requisite for salvation, faith, God gives to all who sincerely desire it. Many theologians do not hesitate to assert that God, rather than permit those heathens, who have a good will and follow the voice of their conscience, to die in unbelief, would work miracles for their conversion. The centurion Cornelius is an example.

2. *Temporal goods are more difficult to acquire than spiritual.*

(*a.*) Let us again take examples from life. How difficult it is for many people to keep up a respectable appearance. They must labor and toil from one year's end to the other and live in the most economical manner to enable them to keep up their household and meet unavoidable expenses, or, as the saying is, to make both ends meet. To how many do the words of God apply: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken."—*Gen.* 3: 19. What must not the sick endure; how much it costs to recover their health! Think of the man who was infirm for thirty-eight years; he was lying at the pool of Siloe, waiting for the motion of the water, in order to be the first to get in, but always in vain; someone always preceded him, and if Christ had not had compassion on him and healed him, he would never have recovered his health.—*John* 5. Think of the woman that was troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years; she had suffered much from physicians, and expended all her means without finding relief. She was cured by merely touching the hem of Christ's garment.

(*b.*) Spiritual goods are far easier to obtain. Mary Magdalen was a great sinner. What was necessary to obtain forgiveness? Nothing but tears, which she shed at the feet of Jesus.—*Luke* 7. The thief on the cross, to find grace, had only to say: "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom;" for immediately Christ, full of compassion, said to him: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise!"—*Luke* 23: 42, 43. And how easily can we recover the grace of God when we have the misfortune to lose it by mortal sin! Nothing is required but a humble confession of our sins. Oh, how fortunate would a criminal, condemned to death, deem himself, if, to avert the pun-

ishment from himself and recover his liberty, he need only confess his crime to a priest! Though by nature we have a strong propensity to evil, though we are much tempted by the devil and the world, yet after all it is not very hard to persevere in good, for the grace of God comes to our aid and gives us courage and strength to surmount all obstacles to salvation. Therefore the Apostle says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—*I. Cor.* 10: 13. Yes, God takes his faithful servants under his special protection, and his graces alleviate every difficulty in the path of virtue, sweetening all that appears bitter to sensual nature. Hence Jesus says: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light." This much is certain, that all men would become holy and be saved if they would do for their soul only the tenth part of what they do for the world.

PART III.

Temporal goods differ from spiritual goods *as regards their duration.*

1. The earth, being itself perishable, possesses nothing and can give nothing that is not perishable. Consider all temporal goods, and you will find none that last for ever; after a longer or shorter time they will be no more. Where are the great and powerful kingdoms of the world, Assyrian, Median, Roman and Greek? They are no more, history knows only their names. Where are the powerful armies of a Xerxes, of an Alexander, of a Cæsar, of a Napoleon I., and of so many other conquerors? They have returned into dust and have left to posterity nothing but an indistinct remembrance of them. Where are the riches of a Crœsus, or the pleasures of the Epicureans, or of any other worldlings of the past? They and their possessors have disappeared like smoke. "Where are the princes of the nations, and they that rule over the beasts that are upon the earth; that take their diversion with the birds of the air, that hoard up silver and gold, wherein men trust, and there is no end of their getting? who work in silver and are solicitous, and their works are unsearchable? They are cut off, and are gone down to hell, and others are risen up in their place."—*Baruch* 3: 16-19. All earthly goods which man possesses, honors and dignities, treasures of gold and silver, joys and amusements, health and life, last but a short time, and when he lies down to die he must leave all behind. Only open your eyes and look around and you will be convinced of this truth. Here is one who but a short time ago enjoyed the best of health, and now he is broken down, lies on

his sick bed or moulders in the grave. There is one who once was considered the greatest beauty and who was surrounded by admirers as sugar is surrounded by flies; and now? Ah, in consequence of age or sickness or perhaps of her dissipations she has became ugly, and no one looks at her any more. There is one who was rich, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, who feasted sumptuously every day; misfortune, luxury or prodigality has reduced him to beggary. Behold how fleeting and perishable are earthly goods! "A voice says: Cry. I said: What shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower fallen off."

2. How is it with spiritual goods? Are they also so fleeting and perishable? No, they are not subject to the change of the times; no earthly power, no accident can destroy them; it only depends on ourselves and they will remain our faithful companions throughout life, and we shall enjoy their fruit for all eternity. Consider all the martyrs and all who have been persecuted for justice's sake. All the earthly goods they possessed were taken from them, lands and money, honors and dignities, life and liberty; but their spiritual goods, their faith, hope and charity, their virtues and merits, could not be taken away from them: these they retained unimpaired, in fact, they increased them by prison, tortures, and death. These spiritual goods have become to them in the other world an inexhaustible source of joy and felicity; their faith is changed into intuition, their hope into possession, their love into union with God, and their virtues and merits have acquired for them the most glorious reward in heaven. The same may be said of all Christians; no one can take these spiritual goods away from them unless they surrender them voluntarily. A philosopher, named Aristippus, on a voyage suffered shipwreck, and lost everything. Soon after, having barely saved his life, he became renowned for his great wisdom, and the inhabitants quickly provided him with everything necessary for life. He wrote to his countrymen, requesting them to take pattern by him and provide themselves with goods which cannot be lost by shipwreck. Such a letter the saints of heaven write to us; they call us to gather, as they once gathered, virtues and good works, for these are goods which death cannot snatch from us. Our Saviour exhorts us to do this, saying: "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not dig through, nor steal."—*Matt.* 6: 20.

PERORATION.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, having renounced the world and dedicated himself to God, said to a certain young man of brilliant talents but who still clung to earthly things, and who was studying at the same time with him in the University of Paris: "Remember, Francis, the world is faithless; it makes promises and does not keep them. And even if the world should give you what it promises, it could never satisfy your heart. Let us suppose that it did satisfy you, how long would your happiness last? Can it last longer than your life? And what will you take with you into eternity! Is there perhaps a rich man there who has taken with him money or a servant for his convenience? Is there a king there who still possesses a thread of his purple garment?" After hearing these words, Francis, the brilliant young man, renounced the world, followed St. Ignatius and became no other than the great St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Society of Jesus. Let us, then, seriously reflect that all earthly things are vain, fleeting, and perishable, and let us direct our eyes to those spiritual goods, which alone have true value, and which even here upon earth give sweet repose to our conscience, and hereafter perfect joy and eternal felicity. **Amen.**

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epistle. *I. Pet.* 5: 6-11. Dearly beloved: Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

ST. PETER EXHORTS US TO PRACTICE DIVERS VIRTUES.

St. Peter wrote two epistles to all Christians, in which he laid before them divers duties of Christianity, encouraged them to constancy, and consoled them in the manifold persecutions and sufferings to which they were exposed among the Jews and Gentiles. The lesson of to-day which I have just read to you, forms the conclusion of the first epistle and contains a very important lesson, which we will consider a little more closely. St. Peter exhorts us—

I. To be humble and to have confidence in God;
II. To be sober and watchful;
III. To be patient in every affliction.

Part I.

The apostle exhorts us—

1. *To be humble,* saying: *Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation.*

(*a.*) The words: *Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God,* have this meaning: We must humbly submit to the ordinances and the guidance of the Almighty. We all have reason *to humble ourselves before God.* For what are we, compared with God? God is almighty, we are weak, and impotent to do any good; God is omniscient, we are short-sighted, and frequently do not know what is useful or pernicious. God is infinitely holy; we are sinners, who are deserving of God's displeasure and punishment. We should therefore humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our impotence and sinfulness and exclaim with St. Francis: "Who art thou, O Lord! and who am I? Thou art the sum of all good, and I the abyss of all evil." We all have likewise every reason to *submit to God the Almighty.* God is our Lord and Creator, in him we live, move, and are; we belong to him entirely, and he can do with us as he pleases. Whether he exalts or humbles us, whether he makes us rich or poor, happy or unhappy, sick, or healthy; whether he allows us to live or to die, we must be satisfied with his holy will, for he has the same—nay, a greater, authority over us than the potter has over his ware. We should submit to him full of confidence, for he is almighty and there is no necessity in which he could not help us; and being infinitely good, he has also the will to help us and turn everything to our advantage. An example of the most consummate submission to the will of God we have in Job, who, after the loss of all his worldly substance and in the greatest poverty, said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done, blessed be the name of the Lord."—*Job* 1: 21. Oh, that we also would humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and subject ourselves to his will in every situation of life!

(*b.*) The Apostle exhorts us to practise humility in order *that God may exalt us in the time of visitation.* The time of visitation when God exalts his oppressed servants and delivers them from their sufferings, often comes even in this life. Joseph, whom Putiphar's wife had shamelessly calumniated, languished in prison, for a long time, but God did not abandon him, but wonderfully raised him to the highest dignity in the kingdom. The Israelites lived many years in the most intolerable slavery in Egypt, but at length the time of visitation came for them. God freed them from the hand of their oppressors, and after a succession of great miracles, gave them the rich land of Chanaan for their inheritance. David was persecuted by Saul and his life was in danger, yet God did not abandon him, but made him king of Israel. Job was blessed with riches and children. Numberless examples from history and daily life could be adduced, showing how God sooner or later visits, exalts and delivers those who humble themselves under his mighty hand. And if he does not do it in

this world, he will certainly do it hereafter. Lazarus lay at the door of Dives, poor, sick, abandoned, and full of misery, but this lasted only for a few years, till his death. What became of him afterwards? Angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. He humbled himself during life, under the mighty hand of God, and on the day of visitation he was exalted. Look at Jesus. The Apostle says of him: "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."—*Phil.* 2: 8-11. Should we not feel encouraged to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? Should we not willingly submit to the guidance of God and with fortitude persevere in trials and afflictions, knowing that the time of visitation will come for us, if not in this life, surely in the next, and that we shall receive a rich reward for everything we endure with patience for the love of God?

2. The Apostle exhorts us to have *confidence*: *Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you.*

(*a.*) By the words, *casting all your care upon him*, it is not to be understood that we should have no further care for our necessities, and our livelihood, but that we should leave everything to God. Such a carelessness would be manifestly against the will of God, who has given us corporal and spiritual powers for the purpose of employing them for his honor and our own good. It is not said in vain: "He that tilleth his ground, shall be filled with bread; but he that followeth idleness, shall be filled with poverty."—*Prov.* 28: 19. That servant who buried his talent and lived unconcerned about the coming of his master, was cast out into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.—*Matt.* 25: 30. With these words the Apostle condemns only an excessive and immoderate solicitude which Jesus himself forbade, saying: "Be not solicitous therefore, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed, for after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."—*Matt.* 6: 31, 32. Such immoderate solicitude is unreasonable and foolish, because it profits nothing, for "which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?"—*Matt.* 6: 27.

(*b.*) The apostle by adding: *for he hath care of you*, gives the reason why we should guard against immoderate solicitude. We

must not be too solicitous, because God has care of us. Is God not powerful and good enough to avert from us what is injurious, and to give us what is good and salutary? If God, our Father, feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, will he not have care of us and give us what we need?

PART II.

1. St. Peter exhorts us to be *sober* and *watchful*, saying: *Be sober and watch.*

(*a.*) *Sobriety* consists in this, that we observe moderation, not only in eating and drinking, but also in clothing, amusements, and generally in the use of the things of this world. Only those Christians can be called sober who bridle their appetite in eating and drinking, who dress according to their state of life, and within their means, who enjoy only lawful pleasures, and these at the right time, without passion and without detriment to the duties of their religion and state of life. Sobriety is the essence of Christianity; for this imposes upon us the strict duty of mortifying ourselves interiorly and exteriorly. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matt.* 16: 24. "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."—*Gal.* 5: 24. Those who yield to the craving of the appetite and by drinking to excess get disgustingly drunk; those who are slaves of lust, violate, I will not say their dignity as Christians, but their manhood, and degrade themselves below the level of the brute creation.

(*b.*) *Watchfulness* consists in this, that we pay attention to everything that happens within and without us, in order to perceive at once what might injure our salvation, and to employ appropriate means against it. The watchful Christian always has an eye upon himself; he is attentive to the thoughts, motions and inclinations of his heart, and rectifies them as soon as he perceives that they aim at anything sinful; he is attentive to his senses, especially to the eyes that they may not lead him into sin; to his tongue, guarding against hastiness and imprudence in speaking; he is attentive to the world around him and about him, and carefully avoids the occasions of sin. There is scarcely a virtue to which we are more frequently exhorted than to watchfulness. Thus Christ says: "Watch ye, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man."—*Luke* 21: 36. Again: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh weak."—*Matt.* 26: 41. St. Paul says: "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith."—*I. Cor.* 16: 13.

2. St. Peter assigns the reason why we should be sober and watch: *Because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.* The devil is called our *adversary,* because he is our sworn enemy, and endeavors in every possible manner to seduce and destroy us. He is called *a lion,* on account of his strength and cruelty, *a roaring lion,* on account of his fierce desire to plunge us into perdition. *He goeth about,* like an enemy, who steals around a fortress, to find out a weak spot where he can enter; *seeking whom he may devour,* that is, his exertions are indefatigable to decoy us into his snares and into eternal damnation. That the devil is our worst enemy and continually plots our ruin the Sacred Scriptures tell us in numberless places. Under the form of a serpent he tempted our first parents, and made them fall; he has at all times laid snares for men, and even had the temerity three times to tempt our Lord in the desert, in order to lead him into sin and to frustrate the work of our redemption.

What then must we do to render the temptation of the evil spirit ineffectual?

(*a.*) We must be *sober.* The Church calls upon us daily to pray for protection, that we may not fear "the assault of the mid-day devil." What devil is this? It is that devil who is accustomed to tempt men after dinner. When they are satiated or have overcharged themselves with meat and drink, they are easily accessible to the sins and vices of impurity, to anger and sloth; and the devil, employing this oportunity, attacks them with his temptations and frequently succeeds in leading them into sin. How many, even among those who have led good lives, have fallen into the snares of the devil for want of sobriety! God had announced his holy law to the Israelites in the midst of thunder and lightning, and they had promised to observe it. After that they sat down, ate and drank—and what happened? They made to themselves a golden calf, and fell into idolatry. Lot remained chaste in the midst of a vicious city; but when he was drunk with wine, he fell into two very unnatural sins of impurity.—*Gen.* 19. How true is what St. Chrysostom says: "Intemperance is the mother of malice, the enemy of virtue; it makes the strong irresolute, the chaste shameless; it knows neither justice nor prudence." Therefore guard against intemperance in drinking; be sober and bridle inordinate desires, that you may not fall victims to the temptations of the devil.

(*b.*) We must *watch.* The devil always desires our ruin, and for that end makes use of every opportunity. He excites us by sinful representations and desires, he directs our eyes to objects

which entice us to evil; he leads us into dangerous occasions and lays snares for our virtue by employing wicked persons to lead us into sin. What, then, is more necessary than that we always watch and pay attention to ourselves and our surroundings, that no temptation may find us unprepared! Who can count all the souls that for the want of vigilance have grievously sinned? Examples: Eve, David, Peter. Let us not forget that we carry our treasure in a frail vessel, and let us walk circumspectly, that we may perceive in time the dangers which the devil prepares for us, and escape them.

(*c.*) We must *resist the devil, strong in faith.* In order not to succumb to the assaults of Satan, it is necessary to resist him, to turn with disgust from his suggestions, to fight against them, and refuse consent to them. That this resistance may lead us to victory, it must be done in faith, that is, we must represent to ourselves the truths of our holy faith in a vivid manner, for these will make us strong and invincible. How true this is; not to mention hundreds of other cases, just think of Joseph of Egypt and of Susanna, whom the belief in the omnipresence and omniscience of God so strengthened that they would rather die than sin. Faith tells us: Have courage, God will help, ask his protection, and the devil cannot prevail against thee. Again faith says: Consider how unhappy you make yourself if you consent to the temptation and sin; you lose the grace of God, shut heaven against yourself and open hell for yourself. At every temptation make an act of faith in the truths of our holy religion; if you do this, I assure you, you will, by the grace of God, overcome all temptations and persevere to the end in his love and friendship, and be saved.

PART III.

The Prince of the Apostles finally exhorts us *to be patient in every affliction.*

1. He writes: *Knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world.* To suffer is the common lot of all the children of God, because they must become conformable to their Lord and Redeemer, and therefore, like him, pursue the way of the cross. Now this is a powerful motive for patience in all the tribulations of this life. Would it not be disgraceful for us to refuse to endure what the disciples of Jesus have endured at all times? Solon, the wise man of Athens, seeing one day a friend of his in great sadness and distress, took him upon a mountain, which commanded a view of the whole city. After having looked at the houses for some time, Solon said to him: "My friend, I

know that you have reason to grieve, but consider that you are not alone. Behold this city and its houses. How much misery and wretchedness far worse than yours is to be found in many of those dwellings? Therefore be comforted, and imagine not that you are the first who has something to suffer." Thus Solon comforted his friend and banished melancholy and sadness from his heart. Console yourselves thus in your afflictions and trials. Say within yourselves: I am not the only one who suffers; thousands and millions of Christians suffer the same afflictions, and greater even than mine. I do not desire, O God, to be treated any better than they; I will carry my cross so long as it is pleasing to thee.

2. *But the God of all grace, who called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you.* This is another motive for patience in afflictions. He calls our attention to the shortness of the sufferings and to the perpetuity of the eternal glory which awaits us if we suffer patiently. The sufferings last but a short time, and generally pass away after a few days, weeks, or months. But if they should even last for years or till our death, they nevertheless could not be called long, for what are twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years compared with eternity! They are as nothing. If you, my Christian friend, in your sufferings are sometimes tempted to pusillanimity or impatience, console yourself with the thought that they will not last long. But what must still more console us in all the tribulations of this life is the hope of a happy eternity, which will be our inheritance if we suffer patiently. O how do the blessed inhabitants of heaven rejoice that they have so constantly and patiently borne the tribulations and trials of this world! Whatever they endured here on earth for the love of God is rewarded a thousandfold and eternally. Think of the shortness of the sufferings in this world and the eternity of the joys of heaven, and you will certainly preserve patience in every tribulation, and acquiesce in the will of God.

PERORATION.

St. Peter concludes the lesson of to-day with the words: *To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.* To praise and glorify God is our destiny on earth; to submit to his empire, to adhere to him and to serve him with equal fidelity in good as well as in evil days, is our urgent duty. Let us, then, comply with our destiny and duty during our mortal life, that hereafter we may obtain our reward and be admitted into heaven, to praise and glorify God with the angels and saints for ever and ever. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL. *Luke* 15: 1-10. At that time: The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost till he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying; Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

2. HOMILETIC SKECTH.

THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP AND OF THE LOST GROAT.

The gospel for this Sunday informs us that publicans and sinners came to Jesus and that the Scribes and Pharisees murmured and said: *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* The publicans who collected the toll for the Romans, and in doing so frequently committed acts of injustice, were hated by the Jews and looked upon as sinners. The Scribes and Pharisees reproached Jesus for his forbearance with sinners, and gave him plainly to understand that he himself could not be holy, otherwise he would not keep company with such wicked people, and even eat with them. Jesus spoke to them three parables for his justification, namely, the parable of the lost sheep, of the lost groat, and of the prodigal son. The gospel of this day contains the first two parables, which we will consider at some lenght:

I. The parable of the lost sheep;
II. The parable of the lost groat.

Part I.

1. Let us first consider the meaning of the parable of the lost sheep.

(*a.*) *Who is he that has a hundred sheep?* Jesus Christ, whom the prophets of the Old Law called a shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom; and he himself shall carry them that are with young."—*Is.* 40: 11. He calls himself the good shepherd, saying: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."—*John* 10: 11-14. Jesus can justly be called a good shepherd, for what a good shepherd does for his sheep he does, and a great deal more, for the faithful; he guides, feeds and protects them and daily offers himself up for them.

(*b.*) By the hundred sheep are to be understood the angels and saints. The shepherd of these sheep is Jesus Christ. Angels and men are his, because he, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is their Creator; he is the Lord and Proprietor of men in particular, because he has purchased them with the price of his precious blood, as St. Peter says: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—*I. Pet.* 1: 18, 19. The sheep has many good qualities; it is an innocent animal, follows at the shepherd's heels, and is wont to browse upon the mountains, for there it finds desirable pasturage. The angels being perfectly pure and holy, always doing the will of God and dwelling with Jesus in the heights of heaven, may with justice be compared to sheep. But men also may be compared to sheep, for like sheep they are weak, have many enemies, easily go astray, and of themselves can not find the right road. A shepherd who has a hundred sheep may be said to be well-to-do. The hundred sheep therefore signify the power, the greatness and the riches of Jesus. He is, as God and man, the Lord of all creatures in heaven and upon earth; he owns especially the Catholic Church, which is spread over all the earth and numbers about two hundred and fifty million members; he is, moreover, the Lord and Master of all the treasures of grace, since as our Redeemer he has merited them for us.

(*c.*) *The lost sheep is the whole human race.* As descendants of Adam all men are sinners by nature. "All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way."—*Is.* 53: 6. By original sin, as well as by personal sins, men had lost the only possession of any value, the grace of God and eternal salvation; they had sunk into such deep misery and wretch-

edness, that of themselves they could never free themselves from it; left to themselves, they were lost for ever. For this reason Jesus says: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke* 19: 10. What holds good of the whole human race, holds equally good of the individual man. Man can sin, deprive himself of the grace of God and of heaven and render himself guilty of eternal damnation, but is unable to repair all this loss. If Jesus Christ had not redeemed us and merited grace and reconciliation for us, not one soul could be saved.

(*d.*) Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, *leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, and goes after that which was lost until he finds it.* Notice here that by *desert* you must not understand a wild, desolate, unproductive region, but one distant from human habitations, for in such lonesome distant regions shepherds used to pasture their sheep, because they found there the best pastures. The *desert* here signifies *heaven;* and the *ninety-nine sheep*, the nine choirs of the angels. Jesus left these ninety-nine sheep when as man he came down upon earth in order to redeem the lost sheep, that is, the human race. When it is said that the good shepherd goes after the lost sheep till he finds it, the love and solicitude wherewith Jesus Christ accomplished the work of our redemption are expressed. Let us reflect on what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for us from his nativity to his death on the cross.

(*e.*) The gospel says that when the shepherd has found the lost sheep he lays it upon his shoulders, rejoicing, and coming home, calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: *Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.* Hereby is expressed how kind, loving and forbearing Jesus is with sinners and what joy his Sacred Heart experiences at their conversion and salvation.

(*f.*) Christ concludes the parable with the words: *I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance.* That there is joy in heaven among the angels and saints of God upon one sinner doing penance, cannot be doubted; they love us and wish nothing so much as that we should do penance and be saved. But when Christ says that the angels and saints and God himself rejoice more over the sinners who do penance than over ninety-nine who need no penance, we must understand this as said according to human feelings when we rejoice momentarily over something which we obtain quite unexpectedly, or only after long and laborious exertion, more than over something else more valuable which we already possess. Examples: the prodigal son, Mary Magdalen.

2. Let us draw a lesson from this parable.

(*a.*) Jesus, the good shepherd, leaves the ninety-nine sheep on account of the one lost. He comes down upon earth, walks about in the form of a servant and annihilates himself, as it were, for our redemption. Is not this self-sacrificing love of Jesus able to induce you, O sinner, to make every sacrifice for the love of Jesus which is required for your conversion. You live in the proximate occasion of sin; it is hard for you to forsake such a house, to give up the company of such a person, to shun such society, to avoid such a conversation. You have a sinful habit; it is hard for you to renounce swearing, gambling, drinking, or sins against purity. Oh, think of your Saviour, who, for the love of you, and the salvation of your immortal soul, has sacrificed everything, even the last drop of his blood; and refuse not what your salvation demands, though it may cost you the greatest self-command and self-denial.

(*b.*) As the good shepherd seeks the lost sheep, so Jesus seeks the sinner and does everything to save him. He seeks him through *his conscience*, which holds his sins before his eyes, vividly represents to him the perdition which is in prospect, moves and urges him to forsake his evil ways and to do penance. He seeks him *through his priests*, who, from the pulpit, in the confessional, and on other occasions, admonish him to repent. He seeks him through the good example of his fellow-Christians, through prosperity and adversity, through crosses and afflictions. Nevertheless, there are many sinners who reject all the calls and visitations of God and stubbornly persevere in sin. Such sinners have reason to fear that on account of their continued impenitence they will be lost. Examples: The people at the time of the deluge. The inhabitants of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus and of the Apostles—Saul, Judas.

(*c.*) The good shepherd takes the lost sheep upon his shoulders and carries it home. As we read in the gospel, Jesus was all love towards sinners. How charitable was he towards the Samaritan woman, the adulteress, Mary Magdalen, St. Peter and the penitent thief on the cross! Where is there a man who forgives injuries and offenses so readily and quickly as Jesus did and continually does! If a man has grievously sinned, our Divine Saviour forgives him at once if he only repents of his sins and is earnestly resolved to amend his life. Ah, who would continue to live in sin when he can so easily obtain forgiveness! How will the reprobate in hell curse their impenitence, since by one good confession they could have escaped the eternal torments of hell!

(*d.*) There is great joy in heaven over the conversion of a sinner; God and his angels and saints rejoice. And why? Does it profit them anything when a sinner is converted? Ah, no; they are eternally happy, no matter whether the sinner is lost or saved. Their joy has its ground in love. They love the sinner, have compassion on him and ardently wish that he may be converted and saved. O sinner, prepare this joy for God, and for his angels and saints by a true conversion and bring forth fruits worthy of penance.

PART II.

The parable of the lost groat has the same significance. He who is signified by the shepherd, is also signified by the woman —God and God's mercy. Many interpreters however refer what is said in the parable of the woman to the Catholic Church established by Christ.

1. In this sense we will consider the parable.

(*a.*) The woman who with the greatest diligence seeks the lost groat is the Church. She is founded by Christ in order to instruct all men of all times and places in the doctrines of salvation, to purify, sanctify and lead them to their eternal destiny. She is upon earth the living, acting Christ, and it is her task continually to apply to men the fruits of redemption.

(*b.*) The lost groat signifies the unbelievers, heretics and sinners who are in danger of being lost for ever. The true faith, taught by Christ, and the state of grace are required for salvation. Whoever through his own fault has not the true faith, or who is defiled by grievous sins, will perish. The groat is a symbol of the human soul; she seems to be of little value, if considered in her imperfections, in her inability to perform supernatural acts, and even more so if compared with the holy angels, who are purer than gold, brighter than diamonds. Nevertheless, the groat as a coin has its value, and the human soul is of great value, because she is immortal, because she is created according to the image and likeness of God, redeemed by his precious blood and signed with the Holy Ghost.—*Ephes.* 1: 13; 3: 30. "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—*Matt.* 26: 26.

(*c.*) The Catholic Church *alone* is the woman, for she alone received the divine commission to seek that which is lost; she alone brings to light the lost groat, whilst sham churches bury it in the mire of heresy and suffer it to perish in darkness. The woman

lights a candle. Christ is the light of the world.—*John* 8: 12. This light is the word of God, which the Church preaches through her priests, in order to convert unbelievers, heretics and sinners. She sends missionaries to the remotest pagan nations, who preach to them the gospel amid a thousand dangers and privations, enjoins all pastors of souls to preach the word of God every Sunday to the faithful and to give the milk of the gospel to the little ones in the school. With the Apostle she says to every pastor, "preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine:"—*II. Tim.* 4: 1, 2.

(*d.*) Having found the groat the woman rejoices. Thus the Church rejoices at the conversion of sinners, unbelievers and heretics. She resembles the widow of Naim, whose maternal heart felt inexpressible joy when Jesus raised her son to life. All the children of the Church, good Catholics on earth and the Church Triumphant in heaven, participate in her joy.

2. Let us now ponder on some lessons which this parable contains. Since the Church seeks with the same diligence as the woman sought the lost groat, to save unbelievers, heretics and sinners, take an example from her, and do all you can to gain souls for heaven. If even the corporal works of mercy draw down God's pleasure and entitle us to a great reward, how much more will the spiritual works of mercy, since the soul is of infinitely more value than the body and this perishable life. As the whole heavenly hierarchy rejoices over the conversion of one sinner, you must perceive that nothing is nobler and more meritorious than to gain souls for heaven. He who saves one soul does a work, which rejoices Jesus Christ and all the saints and angels exceedingly, and for this act of charity the saved soul will thank him for ever. Let it, therefore, be your greatest care to save souls. No sacrifice is so acceptable to God as the zeal to gain souls for heaven. As the devil goes about seeking whom he may devour, so you must go about seeking whom you may save.

(*a.*) But, be also solicitous for the salvation of your own soul, according to the admonition of the Holy Ghost: "My son, keep thy soul."—*Ecclus.* 10: 31. You have two hands, and two eyes, and yet you would not allow one of your eyes to be plucked out, a hand or a foot to be cut off, for thousands of dollars. What folly, what delusion, then, would it be to exchange your only soul for a few acres of land, a little filthy lucre, or a momentary pleasure. Oh, consider what it is to lose your immortal soul! Shun nothing so much as sin; and if you should have the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, do penance without delay, in order to reconcile yourselves with God.

(*b.*) And then take care that your conversion lasts, and guard against every relapse into sin. He who relapses loses all the benefits and graces which he had obtained by his penance; he deprives himself of sanctifying grace, locks heaven against, and opens hell for himself. Nothing is more dangerous than a relapse into former sins, for the relapsing sinner loses the fear of God more and more, and frequently falls into spiritual blindness and obduracy, from which a miracle of grace alone can bring him back to the path of virtue. Oh, that all would take to heart the earnest admonition of the Apostle: "If we sin wilfully, after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment." —*Heb.* 10: 26, 27.

PERORATION.

In conclusion, I exhort you to guard against every sin and especially against a relapse into sin. What a joy and pleasure will it be for Jesus Christ and your mother, the Catholic Church, if you persevere in the path of innocence or of penance. Pray often and fervently; receive the holy sacraments; shun as much as possible the dangers and occasions of sin, and lead a retired life. If you avail ourselves of these means, God will grant you the grace necessary to persevere to the end and to be admitted into heaven by Jesus, the good shepherd. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.—Luke 15: 2.

The gospel of this day is for us, who are sinners, very encouraging and consoling. How affectionate and merciful is our Divine Saviour. The proud and uncharitable Scribes and Pharisees reproach him for his forbearance with sinners: they think it a shame and a disgrace for a just and good man to have anything to do with sinners. But Jesus shows them their error, and teaches them by the parables of the lost sheep and the lost groat,

that for the sake of sinners he came down upon earth, and that there is no greater joy for him than to lead sinners to penance and to rescue them from perdition. The whole contents of the gospel of this day being nothing but a symbolical representation of the mercy of God, I shall briefly explain to you this morning—

I. Wherein the mercy of God consists;
I. What sinners it embraces.

PART I.

The mercy of God consists in this, *that he willingly forgives all sinners.*

1. *God forgives.* This is the first mark of his mercy. To forgive is to lay aside ill-will and aversion towards those who offend us and to wish them well from the heart. We men hardly ever forgive perfectly. Though we say, I forgive him who offended me, yet there often remains in us a certain coldness; we do not love him as before. And though we try hard to wish him well, a certain bitterness is aroused, and it costs a good deal of violence always to suppress these emotions and entirely to destroy them. God forgives most perfectly. "He will put away our iniquities and he will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea."—*Mich.* 7: 19. God sinks all our sins in the sea of oblivion; he no longer remembers them, and he never reminds us that we were once his enemies; he treats us as affectionately as if we had always been his most obedient children; nay, his heart expands, so to speak, and he loves us in a higher degree than many of those who have never grievously offended him. Examples: Mary Magdalen and Peter.

What a consolation for all repentant sinners! God perfectly forgives them, adopts them as his children, and loves them more affectionately than before. They can, if they persevere in their penitential fervor, obtain a greater reward in heaven than many holy persons who have lived in innocence, but served God with less fervor.

2. God forgives *willingly.* This is the second mark of his mercy. It is often difficult for men to condescend to forgive those who have offended them. They must be reminded of the most serious truths of religion, of heaven and hell, in order to soften their hard hearts and dispose them to forgiveness. How differently does God forgive. He is ever ready to receive repentant sinners; nay, he waits with desire for the moment when they return to him. "I have spread forth my hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good."—*Is.* 65: 2. "Come

to me, all you that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11 : 28. "God," says St. Augustine, "is more ready to impart forgiveness to the sinner than the sinner is to receive it." Peruse the whole of Sacred Scripture, and everywhere you will find convincing proofs of the merciful way in which God receives all penitent sinners. The two parables in the gospel of this day give us a clear idea thereof. Take the parable of the prodigal son. How affectionately does his father receive him! He not only does not reproach him, but even falls upon his neck and kisses him saying: "Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found."

Should not this love and mercy of God encourage you, like the prodigal son, to return to him full of humility, contrition and confidence? How can you continue to offend a God who means so well with you, who is daily and hourly prepared to forgive you and to treat you as his beloved children?

3. God forgives *all sinners*. This is the third mark of his mercy. There is no sinner, no matter how guilty, that can not be forgiven. Murderers, robbers, highwaymen, thieves, blasphemers, perjurers, adulterers, in a word, all sinners can find mercy with God. There is also no number of sins that could lock the fountain of the mercy of God. If a man had the sins of the whole world upon his conscience, he need not despair of his salvation, but can hope for pardon. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow, and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."—*Is.* 1 : 18. St. Cyprian says: "Neither the greatness of the crimes, nor the shortness of life yet remaining, nor the extreme necessity of the last hour excludes from the friendship of God. His infinite love and mercy embrace all that return to him." Examples from the sacred Scripture: Mary Magdalen was a great sinner; she lived such a wicked life that she was notorious far and near; seven devils had dwelt in her heart (Luke 8: 2), and yet she obtained pardon. Jesus says: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."—*Luke* 7 : 47. The Samaritan woman, the adulteress, the thief on the cross had grievously sinned, but they also found grace. To convince yourselves of the infinite mercy of God, peruse the Lives of the Saints, and you will find among them many who at one time were great sinners, such as Margaret of Cortona, Mary of Egypt, and yet they are now in heaven. Justly, therefore, David says: "According to the height of the heaven above the earth, he hath strengthened his mercy towards them that fear

him. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him."—*Ps.* 102: 11-13.

With what confidence and consolation may not sinners look up to heaven when they consider the infinite mercy of God! Granted that their crimes, vices and iniquities are as numerous as the grains of sand on the sea-shore; granted that they have become grey in sin and now stand at the portals of eternity, they must not lose courage, much less abandon their souls to despair; if their eyes are moistened with only a single tear, all their sins, in comparison with the mercy of God, are as insignificant as a drop of water compared with the ocean. "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound."—*Rom.* 5: 20. Now it may be asked: What sinners does the mercy of God embrace?

Part II.

God's mercy embraces all those sinners who—

1. *Truly repent.* The mercy of God is infinite as God himself, but its effect is restricted to the true conversion of the sinner. We find this important truth expressed in the clearest words in the Sacred Scripture: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him."—*Is.* 55; 7. "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die."—*Ezech.* 18: 21. Therefore, if the sinner repents, God will be merciful to him and forgive him his sins, but if, on the contrary, the sinner persevere in sin, he will perish. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." The mercy of God then does not consist in this, that he forgives all sinners indiscriminately, but only those who who truly repent. Think of Cain, of the people in the time of Noe, of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, of the traitor Judas, of the obstinate Jews at Jerusalem; they all perished because they did no penance.

Form therefore no false idea of the mercy of God! Do not say: God is merciful; no matter how often and how grievously I may sin, he will forgive me. This is the language of presumption, and leads to perdition. Countless men who sinned, presuming on God's mercy, are now burning in hell. God is infinitely merciful, but also infinitely just. His mercy causes him to forgive the repentant sinner, but his justice makes him condemn the impenitent sinner. The mercy of God should be a pretext to no one for remaining in sin, but rather a powerful admonition to penance.

2. *Repent in time.* God, in his unsearchable counsels, pursues different ways with sinners; to some he grants many years for

their conversion, to others but a short space of time. Manasses, king of the Jews, reigned over fifty years at Jerusalem, and during that long time did indescribable mischief. He built temples for idols, practised sorcery and magic, and seduced his people to idolatry; he shed a great deal of innocent blood, and added sin to sin. And yet this wicked king still found grace; in his captivity at Babylon he did penance and God forgave him his sins. But God treated his son Amon quite differently. He followed in the footsteps of his father and committed crime after crime, imagining that God would give him a long life, the latter part of which he could devote to penance. But, blind man, how he deceived himself! After two years he was killed in the midst of his sinful career and was lost. Dismas, who was crucified with Jesus, after having spent the greater part of his life in sins and vices, found grace in the last hour.—*Luke* 23 : 43. But how did Ananias and Saphira fare, who had committed only one sin, having concealed part of the money received for a field they had sold? God made an example of them; they fell dead at the feet of St. Peter.—*Acts* 5. Therefore ponder the words of the Holy Ghost: "Add not sin upon sin, and say not: the mercy of the Lord is great, he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from him, and his wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day, for his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee."—*Ecclus.* 5: 5-8. Divine mercy is infinite, but then it has its fixed time, and the anger of God follows close on his mercy.

PERORATION.

I conclude my instructions to-day with the admonition of St. Gregory the Great. Let us now employ the precious time and devote our whole life to the practice of good works and not procrastinate till it is about to ebb away, for God, who has promised pardon to the sinner, has not promised to-morrow to the impenitent. God is infinitely merciful and forgives all sinners, those also who have offended him most grievously, but he forgives only those sinners who repent truly and without delay. Let us make good use of the time of grace and work out our salvation without delay, that we may escape the threatening perdition and be saved. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

(See also Vol. VI.)

One of the soldiers with a spear opened his side; and immediately there came out blood and water.—*John* 19: 34.

It was reserved for our own times to have the treasure of the Sacred Heart of Jesus fully opened and revealed. For this end Our Blessed Redeemer made use of a feeble, obscure instrument, so that the whole world might know that the devotion to his loving Heart, previously known only to a few of the saints, was sanctioned in heaven, and was his own work. This instrument was the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, a humble nun of the order of the Visitation of Mary, at Paray, in Burgundy, France. Having shone before God in all the radiance of the most sublime virtues, unknown and unregarded by the world, she died in the odor of sanctity in 1690, and was beatified by Pius IX. in 1864. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is now greatly cherished throughout the Church, Pope Pius IX., of blessed memory, having, for the purpose of its promotion, extended the Feast of the Sacred Heart to the whole Catholic world, to be observed on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi. That the faithful may have a better opportunity of participating in the celebration of this Feast, it has been transferred to this Sunday. With a view to promote this beautiful devotion, I shall explain to you—

I. Why we ought to pay special homage to the Sacred Heart.
II. In what way we ought to pay this homage.

PART I.

We must pay homage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—

1. *Because it is the human, living Heart of our Saviour.*

(*a.*) Jesus is both God and man. As man he has, with the exception of sin, whatever we have; a body and a soul, and, consequently, also *a human Heart.* If we consider the Heart of Jesus as a human Heart it is worthy of the most profound adoration, for it is the principal part of the sacred body of Jesus Christ,

and the chief organ of his blessed soul. The heart is the seat of all our feelings, of joy, sadness and love; from it proceed all things whatsoever we say and do. "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—*Luke* 6: 45. Therefore all the deeds of our Saviour, his endurance of hardship, his going about under great fatigues and doing good, his compassion for the unhappy, his watching and praying at night, proceeded from his Sacred Heart as their source. And for such a loving Heart ought we not to entertain the tenderest affection?

(*b.*) Moreover, remember that principally through his Sacred Heart he accomplished our redemption. His Heart submitted to the will of his heavenly Father, being obedient to the death of the cross. His Heart was so agitated by anguish that he sweat blood, and exclaimed on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—*Matt.* 27: 46. At last Jesus Christ permitted his Heart to be pierced through with a lance, in order to convince us that we owe to it both the beginning and the consummation of our redemption. If we entertain a peculiar veneration for the sacred instruments of his passion, the lance, the nails, the crown of thorns, how much more reason has the Church to cherish a tender devotion to his Sacred Heart. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, if I only look upon thee as a human heart, thou art above all human hearts dear to me, for thou art the source of all virtue and sanctity and to thee principally I owe my redemption.

2. *Because it is the Divine Heart of our Saviour:* for it is the Heart of the God-Man, and therefore united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. *We owe then to this Heart the same adoration as to Jesus Christ, whose Heart it is. As we adore him, so we must adore his Sacred Heart.*

And this devotion should increase on reflecting that if the Heart of Jesus were purely human all the prayers and supplications, all the anguish and blood of this Heart, would only have a finite value, and consequently would he insufficient to blot out our guilt and to satisfy the infinite justice of God; but being the Heart of the God-Man, it is a Divine Heart, because it is God's Heart, and hence all prayers and actions which come forth from it are of infinite value, and therefore more than sufficient for our redemption. How then could we refuse to this Divine Heart a special homage?

3. *Because this Sacred Heart is all love, all tenderness for us.*

(*a.*) The heart is the emblem, the organ and seat of love. As we have eyes to see, ears to hear, feet to walk, a tongue to speak,

so we have a heart to love. Therefore, the heart is the generally acknowledged symbol of love. St. Augustine and St. Teresa are represented as holding a heart in their hands, to signify thereby their fervent, burning love of God. When we read in the Book of Proverbs: "My son, give me thy heart," it means that God demands our whole, undivided love; and when the Church proposes to our veneration and adoration the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she wishes to place before our eyes the ineffable love of him who suffered and died for our redemption and instituted the Sacrament of his body and blood in remembrance of his death. For the same reason the first commandment runs thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

(*b.*) Considering the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a symbol of charity, how many reasons have we to pay to it all possible homage! The Son of God burned with love for us from all eternity, longing to become man and to die for us. Does not the whole work of redemption loudly proclaim his love for us sinful men! Is it not love that induced him to become poor, that he might enrich us; to humble himself, that he might exalt us; to die for us, that we might have life everlasting? Is it not out of love that he is constantly present in the Blessed Sacrament imparting to us all the graces we stand in need of, when we appear before him in humble adoration and full of confidence in his mercy?

Is it not out of love that he daily offers himself up for us upon the altar, and enters into our hearts in holy communion, uniting himself most intimately with us and giving himself to us whole and entire? Should we not venerate this Heart, which is so full of love and compassion, with the greatest love and gratitude?

4. *Because we should atone for the many insults offered to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.* Countless are the insults offered to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. How many never visit him to pay the homage due to him? How many dishonor him by their evil conduct, hardly bending their knee before him, gazing about, talking and laughing? How many abuse the Blessed Sacrament by curses, imprecations and blasphemies? How many receive this Sacrament unworthily in the state of sin and defile their consciences with horrible sacrileges? Oh, how painful must be the wounds which these sins inflict on the loving Heart of Jesus! But his charity towards us is unbounded. And should we not be inflamed with an anxious desire to console our dear Jesus by our ardent love and thus to atone for the outrages committed against this Sacrament of love? This atonement was the principal object Christ had in view when he exhorted Blessed Margaret to promote the devotion to his Heart. This he vouchsafed to reveal in express terms to that holy nun.

PART II.

Our Divine Saviour said to his disciples: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of Heart."—*Matt.* 11: 28, 29. Jesus desires us to honor his Heart by *putting our confidence in him* and *following his example* in *meekness and humility.*

1. We can not put our entire confidence in men, because they either *can not* or *will not* help us; whilst Jesus has the power and the will to help us.

(*a.*) *Jesus can do all things.* Who would doubt the power of the Almighty? He stilled the winds and tempests. Was it not he who with a few loaves fed several thousand men; who healed the sick, and delivered those oppressed by the devil; who recalled the dead to life; And Jesus is still the same God he was eighteen hundred years ago.

(*b.*) Much more our confidence must increase by reflecting that the Sacred Heart is all love, bounty, and tenderness. When did any one in distress ever come to Jesus without being relieved? The blind, the lame, the lepers, come to him, and are healed. He cures before he is asked, as, for instance, the man who had labored under a dreadful malady for thirty-eight long years. When his disciples were anxious to procure our Lord a short rest, he rebukes them, and he himself is never too tired to listen to their petitions. And how compassionate is he with poor sinners! Witness Mary Magdalen in Simon's house, Zacheus, and the penitent thief on the cross. Verily, to seek sinners and pardon them is the ardent desire of his most tender Heart. He says himself: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Luke* 19: 10.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus being so bountiful and powerful, shall we not approach it with all assurance, and with the greatest confidence expect from it every grace and blessing? Yes, and nothing could grieve and offend this divine Heart more than want of confidence in it, shown by omitting to have recourse to it in our necessities. Judas deeply grieved the Heart of Jesus when he betrayed him to his enemies; but still more did he grieve this Heart, so much inclined to mercy and forgiveness, when he no longer had confidence in him and yielded to despair.

2. Jesus admonishes us to imitate his Sacred Heart especially in the practice of two virtues, humility and meekness of heart, telling us to learn of him to be meek and humble of heart. It is

true, we see all virtues in the Heart of Jesus, but there are two in particular, his humility and meekness, because they are his favorite virtues and he particularly wishes us to imitate them.

(*a.*) *Meekness.* The whole life of Jesus was an uninterrupted practice of meekness. Herod seeks his life at his nativity and although the meek Jesus could have destroyed him, yet he goes out of his way. The Samaritans lock their gates against him; his disciples are so angry that they wished to call fire from heaven upon them, but he rebukes them severely, saying: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save."—*Luke* 9: 51-56. His enemies say to him that he has a devil, and seek to stone him: he remains calm and passionless, withdrawing himself from their fury. The Scribes and Pharisees mock him even on the cross; he excuses them and prays for them and his murderers. And how meek is Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, when his own children are so cold or even guilty of horrible sacrileges! Let us admire this heavenly meekness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and learn of him to be meek of heart. Guard against anger, against cursing and swearing, have compassion with the frailties of others, avoid quarrels and discord, and defend your rights and interests with moderation.

(*b.*) *Humility.* St. Basil, reviewing the whole life of Christ, shows that in all his actions he teaches humility. His whole life is a perfect example of the most consummate humility, and his teaching tends to plant this virtue in our hearts, when he says: "Learn of me to be meek and humble of heart." How much did he humble himself at his coming into the world, choosing a poor virgin for his mother, a poor carpenter for his foster-father, and a stable for his palace! He walked upon earth in the form of a servant, was baptized like a sinner by John, washed his disciples' feet, and patiently bore all humiliations. He died as an apparent malefactor on the cross. But his humiliation goes still further in the Blessed Sacrament. Here he appears not even in the form of man, but hides in majesty under the lowly form of bread. Here he allows us to do anything we please with him, to bear him through the streets and crowded thoroughfares to any place we may wish. He allows himself to be distributed to the sinner as well as to to the just, in short he annihilates himself, as it were. Considering this amazing humility of Christ, should we not learn of him to be humble of heart? Oh, let us confess and acknowledge that of ourselves we are nothing but misery and sin, and that we owe all that we are and have to God's infinite and unmerited bounty. Let us not exalt ourselves above others, nor despise others; let us not seek human praise, but let us, in all we do, have nothing in view but the greater honor and glory of God. Let us bear

with patience, if we cannot with joy, the humiliations we meet with. Let us humble ourselves before God; let us humble ourselves before men and before ourselves, for the more we humble ourselves, the greater will be the joy we prepare for the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the more abundantly will his graces and benedictions be showered upon us.

PERORATION.

Endeavor to acquire a tender devotion to the Sacred Heart. Confide in it; it is a most kind and powerful Heart. Hope to obtain from it whatever is necessary in time and eternity. And above all, strive to have your heart transformed into the Heart of Jesus by being humble and meek of heart. And how could you henceforth still love sin and the world, which have inflicted such cruel wounds on this most tender Heart? May the Sacred Heart of Jesus possess your hearts; may his spirit govern your spirit! O Sacred Heart of Jesus, make me daily love thee more and more. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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5. SYMBOLICAL SKECH.

THE CHURCH, THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S HOME FOR THE SINNER.

This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.—Luke 15: 2.

When a traveler who is making a long and laborious journey becomes hungry and thirsty, weary and fatigued, nothing is more desirable to him than an inn with good accomodation; he enters it immediately, refreshes himself, rests, and thus strengthened, continues his journey. The sinner resembles a traveler on a long, difficult journey; his bad conscience, which he can never completely silence, often reproaches him and spoils all the joys of his life, nor does it seldom happen that he loses the means and the capability of indulging his evil desires and passions. Sooner or later, at all events at his departure from this world, every sinner must confess to his great sorrow: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction and have walked through hard ways."—*Wis.* 5: 7. Now God, in his infinite love and mercy, has erected a home of rest for those sinners who walk through

hard ways and thereby become fatigued, and in it they find reception and refreshment. This home is the Church, over the entrance to which is written: "*The Good Sheepherd's Home*", and underneath this: *Come to me all you that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you.—Matt.* 14: 28.

The Church is the Good Shepherd's Home for the sinner; this is the subject of my discourse this morning. We will consider—

I. How the sinner arrives at this Home;
II. How he enters it and how he is treated there.

Part I.

1. It often happens that a traveler is warned against this or that inn. People who do not like the accomodation at a certain inn will try to persuade others not to stop there, but to put up at some other in which they keep a better table at lower rates. In such a dilemma many a sinner often finds himself placed, when, having made the resolution to repent of his wicked life, he is now about to go into the church in order by a good confession to attend to the all important affairs of his conversion. But the world, his companions in sin, endeavor to prevent his repentance and conversion. They say: "You certainly will not be so foolish as to make a devotee or hypocrite of yourself! Would it not be madness for you to exchange all joys and pleasures for a gloomy penitential life? How foolish of you to entertain such an absurd idea! Are you crazy? Such a smart man as you are to believe such nonsense! How ridiculous! Be a sensible man again, as you used to be; banish those capricious notions and enjoy life; man lives only to enjoy life." Thus they speak, and alas! they succeed only too often, and the sinner gives up the intention of putting up at the Home of the Good Shepherd, and continues his sinful course. Diderot, one of the infidel philosophers in the last century, who had abjured God, denied the immortality of the soul and publicly declared that, with the exception of the clothes, there was no difference between a man and a dog, having fallen into a dangerous sickness, resolved at the instance of his servant to reconcile himself again with God and his holy Church. He sent for a priest and prepared to make a confession, to abjure his godless principles and publicly to retract. But his impious friends hearing it, surrounded his bed and made use of every means to prevent his repentance and conversion, telling him that his sickness was not dangerous, and that there was hope of his recovery; they suggested to him that he should go into the country for the sake of the air, as nothing would cure him but a change of climate. Diderot followed their suggestions and

was removed to a villa some distance from Paris. Penance, confession, or retractation of his godless principles were no longer thought of; he was closely watched by his false friends, so that no priest could come near him and thus the unfortunate man died, as he had lived, in sin.

2. Often it is not even necessary to tell a traveler not to go into a certain inn. He has his reasons for not going in and putting up there. The *sign does not please him or the inn is old-fashioned, or too common, or it is too quiet;* or, *seeing only a few guests, he fancies that boarders and travelers are not treated well.*

(*a.*) The Church, the Home of the Good Shepherd, certainly should be welcome to all sinners and they should enter it with the greatest joy. The words, "The Good Shepherd's Home", remind them of Jesus the good shepherd, who sought the lost sheep with the greatest solicitude, and lovingly took it upon his shoulders and carried it home. But who would believe it? the very name "The Good Shepherd's Home" is for many sinners sufficient reason not to go in and put up there, but to pass it by and continue their evil ways. They console themselves by thinking of the mercy of God, imagining that there is time enough yet for penance; if after sone years or on their dying bed they repent, God will receive them in mercy and love. Blinded men, they sin against the Holy Ghost, because they sin, presuming upon the mercy of God and are in the greatest danger of dying in sin. Oh, that they would consider the words: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day, for his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee."—*Ecclus.* 5: 8.

(*b.*) To other sinners "The Good Shepherd's Home" is too common, not fashionable and respectable enough; that is, they think it would disgrace them, were they to renounce their worldly and sinful life and do penance. What would people think and say of us if we no longer attended their entertainments, and soireés, or if we spent hours in church, went monthly or weekly to confession and communion? Oh, horrible to think of, they would point at us with their finger, considering us crazy. A foolish pride, therefore, it is that keeps them from doing penance. O unfortunate people! they are to be pitied because they do not consider "that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God, and that whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God."—*James* 4; 4. What will it profit them always to have been good friends to the world, if in the end they are rejected by the God whom they rejected?

(*c.*) Many sinners do not put up at the "Home of the Good Shepherd" because it is too quiet there. They imagine that the penitential life is without any joy; that they would be obliged to renounce everything that can gladden the human heart; that they would spend the remainder of their life in melancholy—and therefore they have a horror of penance and conversion. But this is a very mistaken notion. God infuses into the heart of the penitent greater and more lasting joys than the world can give its children. St. Augustine says: "I plunged into pleasures, and found only sorrow." "Blessed are they that mourn," says our Lord, not only because they will be consoled in eternity, but because, even on earth, the tears of repentance have their joys, their delights, and are sweeter than all the false and fleeting joys of sin. Hence David says: "Better is one day in thy courts (O Lord) than a thousand" (days in the joys and pleasures of the world). If sinners had any knowledge of the joy of true penitents they would not hesitate a moment to enter into the Good Shepherd's Home and be converted to the Lord with all their heart.

3. There are travelers who are glad when they find an inn; they are weary, hungry, thirsty, and therefore easily resolve to go in, in order to be refreshed. Thus there are sinners who strongly feel the necessity of doing penance. They have perhaps, like the prodigal son, by their dissipation and passions brought misery and poverty on themselves, and now make a resolution to reconcile themselves with God, that they may not fall a victim to eternal misery and perdition. The thought of the multitude and greatness of their sins fills them with anguish and terror; hence they resolve to follow the way of penance in order to find their lost peace. They remember the words of the Psalmist: "The Lord is gracious and merciful, patient and plenteous in mercy; the Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."—*Ps.* 144: 8, 9. They put their confidence in God and say with the prodigal son: "I will arise, and will go to my father."—*Luke* 13: 18. Happy those sinners who put up at the Good Shepherd's Home, for they are well treated there!

Part II.

When a traveler enters an inn he meets with a good reception, especially if he seems well-to-do. The host meets him and enters into a pleasant conversation with him. He gives him every information about the place, the roads and such other matters that may be of use to him on his journey; he orders a good meal for him, that he may satisfy his hunger, and if he remains overnight he shows him to his room, where he finds a good bed and everything necessary for his comfort, so that he may be enabled

in the morning to continue his journey with renewed strength. The best resting-place in the world is the Good Shepherd's Home, the Church.

1. *Here the sinner is instructed in everything pertaining to his salvation—*

(*a.*) *By the pastors, who preach the word of God every Sunday and holiday.* There is nothing relating to faith or morals that is not sometimes made the subject of the discourses; for they treat of God and his attributes, of virtues and good works, of sins and vices, of the duties of one's state and religion, of the different means of salvation, of the rewards and punishments which respectively await the good and the bad hereafter. On the sinner who listens to these Christian instructions with a good disposition they will have a salutary influence, and by little and little will move him to renounce his sinful life and to do penance. History furnishes numberless examples of the efficacy of the divine word. The Apostles and their successors have converted millions of infidels and sinners by their sermons, and have renewed the face of the earth. Examples: The sermon of Jonas at Ninive, of Peter on the feast of Pentecost.

(*b.*) *By the Christians who are present and who edify him by their devotion.* When he sees how the assembled believers behave in church, praying with the greatest devotion, it makes a salutary impression upon him; his heart is warmed, and involuntarily he falls upon his knees and begins to pray. Many unbelievers heretics and sinners, who by chance have assisted at divine worship in a Catholic church, have been converted by the devotion of the faithful.

(*c.*) *By the sight of the pictures of the saints, of the Stations of the Cross.* St. Gregory says: "The pictures of the saints are placed in the churches, that those who cannot read books may at least read with their eyes what they cannot read in books." He who attentively looks at the fourteen Stations of the Cross receives as clear an insight into the passion of Jesus as if he read it in a book. The pictures of the saints encourage us to good, because they bring before us the virtues of the saints. Thus St. Gregory of Nyssa says of himself, that he never could look at the picture which represented Abraham as he was about to sacrifice his son, without shedding tears. It once happened that by looking at a picture of David shedding tears, a young man who had been leading a dissolute life bitterly bewailed his sins, repented, and was permanently converted.

2. *Here he is raised up and consoled—*

(*a.*) *By prayer.* God himself says through the prophet: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—*Ps.* 49: 15. And Christ invites, in most affectionate words, all the afflicted, and promises them consolation and aid: "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—*Matt.* 11: 28. Truly, what is more natural than to find consolation in prayer, if we perform it with fervor and confidence? We feel relieved when we can reveal our troubles to a sympathizing friend. How much more consolation must we receive from prayer, in which we are allowed to converse familiarly with God and to tell him everything that troubles us! If the sinner profoundly humbles himself before God and calls upon him for grace and pardon, God affectionately turns to him, infuses consolation into his heart, and assures him of his benevolence and grace. Oh, what a happiness for the sinner that he can still pray!

(*b.*) *By hearing the word of God.* As crushing as the word of God is for the impenitent, obstinate sinner, so is it consoling for him who makes a resolution to repent and amend; for it gives him the assurance that he will obtain pardon from God's infinite mercy. Thus God says: "Is it my will that a sinner should die, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live?" —*Ezechiel* 18: 23. And Jesus says: "The son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save."—*Luke* 9: 56. By the word of God the sinner is taught that he may hope for forgiveness, no matter how far he may have gone astray. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."—*Is.* 1: 18. Examples: Manasses, David, Mary Magdalen, the thief on the cross.

(*c.*) *But especially by confession.* What sweet consolation a good confession, especially a good general confession, affords, you all know who have confessed sincerely and penitently. You felt before confession as if a heavy load were on your conscience; you went into the confessional full of anguish and anxiety, but how consoled you were after your confession! The sick man rejoices over his recovered health; the prisoner over his newly gained liberty, the criminal condemned to death over his pardon, and why should not the sinner rejoice when after a good confession he can say: Now my soul that was sick unto death is well again: I am free from the slavery of Satan and the fetters of sin: I again possess sanctifying grace; I am a child of God and an heir of heaven.

3. *Finally, here he is refreshed.* He is refreshed by the *word of God* and *prayer*, which encourage and strengthen him to shun sin and to lead a Christian life; by the *Sacrament of Penance*, in which special grace is imparted to him, enabling him to overcome all temptations and to guard against a relapse; but especially by holy communion, in which Jesus unites himself most intimately with him and gives him strength to combat all the enemies of his salvation, to practice the Christian virtues and to persevere to the end.

PERORATION.

Blessed are those sinners who do not pass by the Good Shepherd's Home, but remain there to eat and drink! They find everything that they need and can wish for: instruction, consolation, refreshment and nourishment. As we are all sinners more or less, having often offended God grievously, and are even now offending him, if not by mortal, at least by venial sins, no place in the world should be dearer to us than the Good Shepherd's Home. Go to church, and hear mass, if not every day, at least on Sundays and holidays; attend church not only in the morning but also in the afternoon. Hear the word of God; pray with interior recollection and a penitent heart; receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist as often as possible, that you may obtain rest for your souls. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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6. MORAL SKETCH.

ON DELAYING REPENTANCE.

This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.—Luke 15: 2.

Our divine Saviour in the gospel of this day justifies himself against the Scribes and Pharisees, who reproached him for receiving sinners and eating with them, and explains in the parables of the lost sheep and lost groat, that he was come to seek and to save that which was lost. No shepherd seeks his stray sheep, and no woman the lost goat, with greater solicitude than Jesus sought sinners in order to save them from perdition. What

he did during his mortal life he continues to do to the end of the world; he is ever seeking sinners and giving them grace after grace, that they may enter upon the way of penance. But alas! now, as formerly, many sinners do not allow themselves to be found; they reject all graces and defer their conversion from time to time. The condition of such sinners is really deplorable, for there is reason to fear that they will come to a miserable end. I propose to show to-day—

I. That sinners who always defer their repentance deserve to die impenitently;

II. That they have more reason to expect an impenitent than a penitent death.

Part I.

Sinners who defer their conversion from time to time with the intention of repenting later on, perhaps in old age, on their death-bed, deserve to die impenitently. Why?

1. *On account of their presumption.*

(*a.*) He who defers his conversion with the intention of repenting later on, knows and believes that leading the sinful life he does he cannot possibly be saved, and that he must necessarily repent if he wishes to escape eternal damnation. Knowing and believing this, it is not his intention to remain always impenitent, but at present he will sin, and continue to sin till it shall please him to repent. Is not this saying, if not in words, at least in reality: I am very well pleased with my sinful life. I will continue it and defy the judgments of God, but later, when it shall please me, I will offend God no more and invoke his mercy. What language! Does not such a presumptuous sinner deserve that God should withdraw his mercy from him and let him die in his sins?

(*b.*) In the Book of Judges (chap. 11) we read that Jephet, a most valiant man and warrior, was expelled by his countrymen from his native city. But when, shortly after, the Ammonites made war against them and they were hard pressed, they had recourse to Jephet to help them, saying: "Come thou, and be our prince, and fight against the children of Ammon." And he answered them: "Are not you the men that hated me, and cast me out of my father's house, and now you are come to me constrained by necessity?" The same may be said of sinners who defer their repentance from day to day, and who resolve to repent on their death-bed. They drive God, as it were, out of

their heart; after many years of sin, when death knocks at their door, they call upon God, and beseech him to have mercy on them and to help them. Do such persumptuous sinners deserve that God should snatch them from the claws of the devil and receive them in love?

(*c.*) Hear what God himself says in the Book of Proverbs (1: 24-26): "Because I called, and you refused: I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared." "He who defers his repentance to the last days of his life has no faith, for how easily it may happen that in the meantime he will fall a victim to the judgments of God. In time of necessity God will not hear his weeping, because he would not hear the voice of God in the days of his prosperity."—*St. Gregory the Great.* Denis the Carthusian relates of a certain young man, that God frequently invited him to penance, but that he always deferred it and consoled himself by saying: "After awhile I will do penance." He died suddenly and soon after appeared to one of his acquaintances in his sleep, and said with a pitiable voice: "To-morrow, accursed to-morrow, thou has plunged me into the pool of eternal fire!" Who does not see that sinners, by always deferring their conversion, act very presumptuously and deserve to die impenitently?

2. *On account of their ingratitude to God.* If a rich man gave his servants a large sum of money and lucrative situations, would he not deserve that they should be grateful to him and manifest their gratitude by good conduct? But supposing these servants squandered the money, neglected their duties and even insulted their lord and offended him in every possible way, would it not be base ingratitude? Would not such ingratitude draw down upon the servants the displeasure and punishment of their master? But I ask: Do not sinners who are ever deferring their repentance act more basely and culpably than these servants? God gives them grace after grace, he acts interiorly through the voice of their conscience and exteriorly through his priests and others; he allows them to live on through the holy seasons of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, and invites them to be reconciled with him by the worthy reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist; he sends them prosperity and blesses their undertakings in order to draw them to himself, but they remain in sin; yes, the graces and benefits which they receive from him only serve as means to offend him more grievously. Is not this the basest ingratitude towards God? Do not such sinners deserve that God should withdraw his hand from them and allow them to be lost?

Horrible was the desolation with which Jerusalem was visited according to the prophecy of Christ. During the siege by the Romans famine raged most terribly in the city. The greater part of its inhabitants were compelled to eat things the very look of which disgusted them; and what almost surpasses belief, one mother killed her infant and consumed half of it. Over a million Jews perished during the siege; ninety-seven thousand were made prisoners and condemned, some to hard labor, others to death: whilst many were sold into slavery, and dispersed all over the world. The city, together with its magnificent temple, was in a few hours reduced to ashes and a heap of ruins. What was the reason that Jerusalem with its inhabitants was so terribly punished? It was ingratitude, because in spite of all the graces and benefits of God they persevered in unbelief and sin. Jesus plainly says this: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate."—*Matt.* 23: 37, 38.

Sinners who always defer the amendment of their lives have reason to fear that, on account of their ingratitude, God will withdraw his graces from them and permit them to die in their sins.

3. *On account of their contempt of God.* Man is under the strict obligation to serve God all the days of his life—in his childhood, in his youth, in his mature years and in his old age. If he never serves God for a single day, or even for an hour, he is guilty of contempt of God for the simple reason that he prefers something created to the Creator, and, so to speak, does what the Jews did when they preferred the murderer Barabbas to our Divine Saviour. Of such a contempt sinners make themselves guilty who continue to sin and defer the amendment of their life to old age or their death-bed. For what else is it than to despise God if we prefer our own perverse will or despicable desires and passions to him and his holy will? And sinners who despise God, not only once and again, but as long as they defer repentance, do they not deserve that he should turn away from them and let them go to perdition?

Part II.

Sinners who always defer their conversion have good reason to fear that they will die an impenitent death rather than a penitent one. The reason is because—

1. *Either they are no longer able to repent—*

(*a.*) First of all, the sinner needs time for repentance. If the damned in hell had only one minute for repentance, they could be saved; but because they have not even this one minute, their repentance, and, consequently, also their salvation, is absolutely impossible. It is, however, certain that man has nothing less in his power than time; he can not count on a day, or on an hour, much less on days. "Man knoweth not his end, but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them."—*Eccles.* 9: 12. "Watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Many who imagine that they have the prospect of many years before them and make plans for the future, are like the rich man in the gospel, who had his barn pulled down and built a larger one, in order to store away his grain, and who said to himself: "Soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer." The fool; what a miscalculation he had made, for that very night his soul was required of him.—*Luke* 12: 16-20. It frequently happens that sinners are snatched away quite unexpectedly. Examples: The people at the time of the deluge; the Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the Roman general, Titus, who came with a great army and laid Jerusalem in ashes. Core, Dathan, and Abiron. Ophni and Phinees, Heli's sons, Amnon. Now if death surprises men, and especially sinners, and puts an end to their life contrary to all expectation, have not sinners who always defer their conversion reason to fear they will die without repentance?

(*b.*) But let us suppose that God does not snatch away such sinners suddenly, but sends them premonitions of death, sore affliction and sickness, will they really repent? Ah, it is much to be doubted, for no time is less suitable for repentance than that of a serious sickness or when death approaches. At such a time the sick person is completely exhausted and worn out by bodily pains, so that the mind is, as it were, clouded. Whatever is done is for the alleviation of the pains of the body. Even those who surround him, friends, relatives, physicians, nurses, are more concerned about the body than the soul. And thus he may easily die without any thought of conversion, because he had no idea of his danger, and thought that in a few days he would be up and about again. And even if at the entreaty of a real friend he consents to make his confession, what benefit can be expected from it when all the faculties of his mind are so weakened that whatever he says and does is said and done mechanically rather than with conscientiousness and freedom of will?

(*c.*) For true repentace grace on the part of God is also required. Of himself no man can do anything profitable for his

salvation, as the Apostle says: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." Now though we believe with most theologians and with the Fathers of the Church that God does not withdraw his grace entirely from the greatest sinner, this much is certain, that he turns away from such persons, and gives his graces more sparingly to those who never cease to offend him and only return ingratitude for his benefits. If they would zealously avail themselves of these graces, they could still do penance and be saved; but they do not, because they are already blind and obdurate; and the consequence is, that the graces remain ineffectual, and that as impenitent sinners they perish.

2. ***Or because they do not desire to repent.***

(*a.*) It is said by a man who saw a lion for the first time, that he was so scared and terrified that he grew pale and trembled like an aspen leaf; but afterwards, when he saw the lion oftener, his fear gradually grew less, till at length he so accustomed himself to the sight that he was not in the last afraid. This is the picture of the sinner. At his first fall he is agitated by fear and anguish, but after repeated falls he loses this fear more and more, and finally sin becomes a matter of indifference to him and he gives up all desire of amendment. How foolish, then, are sinners who defer their conversion, and think that after awhile, perhaps in old age, or on their death-bed, they will repent. As they are now lacking the will to repent, it is more than probable that after awhile they will have no thoughts of repentance and conversion. The words of the Sacred Scripture are applicable to them: "His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth; and they shall sleep with him in the dust."—*Job* 20: 11.

(*b.*) The longer man perseveres in sin, the more difficult becomes his conversion, for sin by little and little becomes a second nature, which hardly ever, or only with the greatest difficulty, can be changed. The holy Abbot Arsenius while in his cell heard a voice saying: "Go forth, I will show you the works of men." When he had gone out he saw a hideous negro who was attempting to lift up a large bundle of wood. When he found himself unable to do so, he added another bundle. Then he tried to lift the two bundles upon his shoulders, but they fell upon him, and he was crushed under the weight. Arsenius seeing this and asking the meaning of the vision, received this answer: "This negro signifies those sinners who, notwithstanding that it is now difficult for them to forsake their iniquities, comfort themselves with the vain hope that after awhile they will repent though they have still further increased the load of their sins."

Unfortunate men! As the greatest difficulties are in the way of their conversion because of their inveterate habits, they give up all intention of repenting and die impenitent.

(*c.*) Not a few sinners indeed show signs of repentance on their death-bed. They have no objection to calling in a priest, they receive the last sacraments, and make fair promises that they will serve God with fervor if they recover their health. Is this true repentance? It is possible, for as long as a sinner lives he can still obtain grace and pardon, as did the penitent thief on the cross. But it is also possible that the good dispositions of the sinner are mere delusions. His expressions of sorrow may have their foundation in the fear of death or of some temporal misfortune and may not be real sorrow, and therefore they are without value before God. He who for years has been perverse and taken pleasure in evil may reasonably fear that in advanced age, and even on his death-bed, he will not really change his mind, though his exterior behavior may be satisfactory. Hence St. Augustine says: "If a person wishes to do penance in his last illness, we do not discourage him, but we do not guarantee that he will die happily. We can give him penances but no assurance."

PERORATION.

How sad, then, is the condition of those sinners who defer their conversion from time to time; they are in imminent danger of being lost; for they deserve to die without repentance and have reason to fear this most terrible of all evils. Far be it from you heedlessly to continue living in the state of sin and defering your conversion from day to day. If you have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin, make at once an act of contrition, ask forgiveness of God and go to confession at the first opportunity, in order to reinstate yourselves in the state of grace. Should there be any present who have lived in mortal sin for years, I exhort and adjure them, by the salvation of their immortal souls, to remain no longer in this unhappy state, but as soon as possible, and better still, to-day or to-morrow, to make a good and sincere confession and to reconcile themselves with God. Only a timely, radical and lasting repentance obtains grace for the sinner and opens to him the portals of heaven. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

7. MORAL SKETCH.

OUR CONDUCT TOWARDS SINNERS.

The Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.—Luke 15: 2.

The Pharisees and the Scribes think ill of our Lord and murmur because he condescends to keep company with sinners. *This man,* they say, *receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* O blinded men! they reprehend what they ought to praise; and what should be their greatest joy excites their ill-will and anger. Jesus, came to seek and save that which was lost, and hence his conversation with sinners; he sought to attract them and save their souls. And it was just this love and mercy of Christ towards sinners that caused many of them to do penance and to be saved. With regard to us, the company of sinners is forbidden when we run the risk of being perverted. If there is no danger, it is allowed, nay, it is even a spiritual work of mercy to endeavor to convert sinners. We must distinguish between the sinner and sin; we must love the sinner, but hate and shun his sin. We will meditate on this to-day and consider the two following points:

I. We must always be kind to sinners and love them;
II. We must always hate and shun sin.

PART I.

1. We must always be kind to sinners *and love them*—

(*a.*) *Because God is kind to them.* How much is God offended by men! Imagine a pile of sand as large as, say, a palace. How many grains of sand are in that heap? I do not hesitate to assert that the number of these grains of sand is not so great as that of the sins committed in a single year by the thousand millions of people who live upon the face of the earth. And among these sins there is a countless number of mortal sins. Now it is certain that a greater offense is committed against God by a venial sin than is committed against a man by the greatest insult that can be offered him. For instance, if we entertain a slight aversion to one of our neighbors, or if we are guilty of a lie told merely

in jest, or of a wilful distraction in prayer, we offend God far more than we should have reason to be offended if any one were to spit in our face, strike us or even take away our life. The reason is because the grievousness of the offense is to be measured by the greatness of the person offended. It is evident that every sin, even the least, is in regard to God an infinite offense, because he is infinitely perfect. Now if God, notwithstanding that sinners offend him so often and so grievously, is always indulgent to them, should not we also have forebearance with them? If God has patience with sinners who live thirty or forty years in sin, and if he not only prolongs their life, but also sends them riches and prosperity, treating them as affectionately as if they were his most obedient children, should we not also treat with kindness persons who offend us, and forgive them for God's sake, thus returning them good for evil?

(*b.*) *Because God wills that we should be kind to them.* At the behest of God, Jonas had announced destruction to the city of Ninive. But seeing that God has compassion on the city on account of its repentance, he repined and wished himself dead. His sorrow increased still more when the ivy under whose shade he rested all at once withered, and the sun beat upon his head, and he broiled with the heat so that he almost perished. But the Lord said to him: "Thou art grieved for the ivy, for which thou hast not labored, nor made it to grow, which in one night came up, and in one night perished. And shall I not spare Ninive, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons?"—*Jonas* 4: 10, 11. Here we plainly see that it is displeasing to God if we do not have patience with sinners and endure their faults. Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem to the Paschal feast wished to stop in a city of the Samaritans; they received him not, but locked the gates of the city against him when they recognized him as a Jew. His disciples were so incensed that they were going to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them. But Jesus rebuked them saying: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save."—*Luke* 9: 51-56.

2. We must love them—

(*a.*) *Because God loves them.* Jesus Christ says that God "maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."—*Matt.* 5; 45. Life and health, food and raiment, riches and prosperity, the sinners and the just have from the Father of lights, from whom is "every best gift, and every perfect gift."—*James* 1: 17. It is often the sinners whom God blesses, at least for some time, with earthly goods, in order

to draw them to himself and to show them that, notwithstanding all their offenses he still loves them. But it is spiritual goods and gifts that the hand of God bestows upon sinners most liberally. He announces his will to them in the instructions given them by his priests, also through good books, and their conscience, and in various other ways; he gives them opportunities of participating in the public worship of God and receiving the holy sacraments; he commissions the Church continually to pray and offer up the sacrifice of the mass for them; he directs their attention to the virtues of the saints, in order to encourage them to follow their example; he influences them interiorly, enlightening, strengthening and urging them to repent. Thus God shows sinners by his countless benefits that he loves them and wishes nothing more ardently than that they be saved. Now, since God loves sinners so affectionately, shall *we* not love them? Ah, where would be our conformity to God, if, like the Scribes and Pharisees, we should look upon sinners with contemptuous eyes, hating them or wishing them evil?

(*b.*) *Because God commands us to love them.* Charity is the first and principal commandment for Christians. "These things I command you, that you love one another."—*John* 15: 17. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."—*John* 13: 35. "All the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—*Gal.* 5: 14. This love must be universal, extending to all men, sinners, enemies, and those who offend us. Therefore Christ expressly said: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you."—*Luke* 6: 27, 28. God strictly requires us to love even the greatest sinners, for if we should withdraw our love from any man, though he be the greatest malefactor or our bitterest enemy, nourish hatred against him, wish him evil, or in word or deed treat him uncharitably, we could not expect of God grace and forgiveness. Jesus emphatically declares this, saying: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses."—*Matt.* 6: 15.

In order to fulfil this important commandment, take Jesus for your pattern. Your heart should burn with love and compassion for sinners, when you see how lovingly Jesus treated the greatest sinners; how he even shed tears over the impenitent city of Jerusalem, which had done him so much evil!

Part II.

1. *We must always hate sin.* Sin comes from the devil, and is an offense against God; it robs man of sanctifying grace, shuts heaven against him, and delivers him to eternal damnation; it is

therefore the evil of all evils, and must be hated and detested above all things. This hatred of sin must be—

(*a.*) *Universal.* Whatever sin it may be, we must hate it, because every sin is an offense against God. We must not conform ourselves to the judgment of the world, in whose eyes the greatest sins and vices, such as ambition and pride, impurity, revenge, suicide, unbelief, neglect of all religious duties, are no faults, or at least very excusable ones, in fact even sometimes praiseworthy. Let us not be guided by the predominant spirit of the times, but let us judge by the light of faith, for only by this standard can we know infallibly what is right and good, and what is wrong and evil. On the day of judgment we shall see how falsely the world judges of good and evil, and how many of those whom the world overwhelms with praise and applause will carry the brand of damnation on their foreheads. Our hatred of sin must be universal, in the sense that we disapprove, hate and detest evil in every man, whoever he may be. Many Christians are partial and indulgent to persons for whom they have a certain predilection or inclination; they find everything good, even real faults they praise as virtues or at least excuse them; in others, on the contrary, whom they do not like, they judge everything with the greatest severity, and often impute to them small faults as if they were great crimes. Self-love or the inordinate love of our neighbor does this; it so blinds men that they judge falsely; they overlook or even praise in one person what they blame and censure in another. Do not act thus, but take God for your pattern, who is just towards all men and renders to every one as he deserves, whether it be good or evil.

(*b.*) *Active.* We must do all we can to convert the sinner. We must resemble a good physician, who uses all suitable means to cure his patient. Such means of amendment are—

First, a reproof, which our Saviour prescribes in these words: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother."—*Matt.* 18: 15. But this must be done with prudence and love, therefore, at the right time, in the right place, in the spirit of meekness, and in such a manner that the erring brother may see that our motive for reproving him is not passionate excitement and bitterness, but only duty and love. Very appropriately St. Francis of Sales says: "Nothing is more bitter than the shell of a nut which is still green, and nothing sweeter and more healthy for the stomach when it is boiled down with sugar. The same may be said of a reproof, which is naturally bitter, but, boiled down by the fire of love and seasoned with meekness, it becomes agreeable and salutary."

Secondly, good example, according to the admonition of Jesus: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 16. Example is better than precept; actions speak louder than words. St. Gregory the Great says: "Most people are more inflamed with the longing for heaven by examples than by argument." St. Chrysostom: "By good example more souls are converted than by miracles; if it were not for good example all sinners would probably go to ruin." Good example is better than reproof, because it can be given by everyone, always and everywhere.

Thirdly, prayer. The prayer we offer up for sinners is particularly acceptable to God, because it comes from a loving heart, and there can be no doubt that God will give to sinners for whom many prayers are said great and perhaps extraordinary graces for their conversion. "Let us pray for one another," St. Chrysostom exhorts us, "for to pray for one's self is in a certain degree a law of nature, but to pray for others is always a work of grace." St. Paul owes his conversion to the prayer of St. Stephen; St. Augustine to his mother St. Monica.

2. *We must always shun sin.* We must shun the society of the wicked and the vicious as much as we can. This is a very important rule, which holds good—

(*a.*) *For all men.* Every man by nature is inclined to evil, and if he is enticed to evil from without, his fall is almost inevitable. Now since friendly intercourse with vicious men is always united with strong allurements to evil, it is evident that when there is a question about preservation from sin, we must avoid such society as much as possible. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it, and he that hath fellowship with the proud shall put on pride. What agreement shall the earthen pot have with the kettle? for if they knock one against the other, it shall be broken."—*Ecclus.* 13: 1, 3.

(*b*) *Especially for young people.* Companionship with vicious people is more dangerous for these, for they are very susceptible of sensual impressions, at the same time very inexperienced, apprehending no danger though their feet are already in the snare. Oh, how many young people who were good and innocent have been victimised by bad companions. Hence the affectionate admonition of the wise man: "My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them. Walk not thou with them, restrain thy foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil."—*Prov.* 1: 10, 15, 16. Christian sons and daughters, stay away from houses in which there is no fear of God, and in which fathers

and mothers allow every disorder; avoid frivolous society, dances, and dangerous amusements; do not keep company with persons of the opposite sex, for it is highly dangerous. Live a retired life, for only in the shadow of solitude will innocence and virtue flourish.

PERORATION.

Be kind then towards the sinner; have patience with his faults and frailties; love him sincerely, in order to follow your Saviour, who was so compassionate towards poor sinners that he shed his precious blood for them. Hate and shun sin; *hate it*, and strive to effect the conversion of sinners; *hate it*, and therefore shun the fellowship of irreligious and immoral people, and if necessity compels you to be with them, employ the necessary prudence so that you may remain uncontaminated. Keep company with the wise, the good and the virtuous, that you may be guided to virtue and piety and may hereafter find your place among the elect in heaven. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epistle. *Rom.* 8: 18: 23. Brethren: I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waited for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain, even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

THE FUTURE RENOVATION AND TRANSFIGURATION OF THE WHOLE CREATION.

The lesson which I have just read for you is taken from the eighth chapter of the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. The Apostle speaks of the glory which is in prospect for us as children of God and co-heirs of Christ, and which is so great that all the sufferings of the present life cannot be compared with it. To convince us of the greatness of this glory, he calls our attention to the renovation and transfiguration of the whole creation, for which even the irrational and inanimate creatures sigh, and which will take place at the end of time. The lesson, as already intimated, treats—

I. Of the glory which awaits us after this life;
II. Of the desire of all creatures for redemption and glorification.

PART I.

1. *I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* By these words St. Paul expresses his conviction that all the sufferings of the present life cannot be compared with the happiness which the elect enjoy in heaven. Let us first cast a glance at the sufferings—

(*a.*) *Which the pious and, in fact, all men have in common.* "Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all.—*Ecclus.* 40: 1. This applies to all men, to the good as well as to the wicked, to the king on the throne and to the hireling in the humble hut. Historians inform us that the king of the Persians had an army as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore; still greater is the army of sufferings to which man is subject. Some of these sufferings, to mention, but a few, are *Sicknesses;* how multiform are they! Countless are the ills that flesh is heir to; *Poverty and want;* how many families can hardly obtain the necessaries of life! *Cares and troubles* in every state of life; how many are troubled so much that they cannot even sleep at night. *Various tribulations, accidents, evils, and misfortunes,* such as *war, epidemics, conflagrations, inundations, earthquakes, failure of crops, loss of property. Difficulties in every state of life.* All complain, from the king to the beggar. Truly, Job was right when he said: "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries."—*Job* 14: 1.

(*b.*) *At the sufferings which are peculiar to the pious.* These are the afflictions which they feel when again and again they are tormented by various temptations against humility, meekness, chastity; when, in spite of all the firm purposes which they make, they fall again and again, now into this fault, now into that; when they perceive that those under their care are so lukewarm in the service of God and that all entreaties and admonitions prove ineffectual. They are much grieved, too, at the unbelief of the world, at the countless sins by which God is daily offended, at the afflictions and persecutions which the Church and her faithful adherents are compelled to endure, at the injustice, untruth and malice which so often in this world triumph over truth and virtue, at the blindness and obstinacy of so many infidels, heretics and sinners, who reject all graces, obstinately persevere in sin, and are therefore lost for ever.

2. All these general and particular afflictions of pious Christians are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them—

(*a.*) *On account of the greatness of that glory.* The cruel monster Antiochus commanded his satellites to cut out the tongues of the brothers called the Machabees, and the skin of the head being drawn off, to chop off the extremities of their hands and feet, and thus maimed in all parts, to bring them to the fire and to fry them in the frying-pan.—*II. Mach.* 7. These were tortures, indeed, of which we cannot think without shuddering. But what is the happiness which they now enjoy in heaven! It is so great that the former sufferings cannot be compared with it. Count together all the sufferings and pains which all men together have endured, from Adam to this day—what are they in comparison with the felicity of the saints in heaven? They are more insignificant than a grain of sand in comparison with the whole universe. All sufferings here below are finite and limited: man in his mortal life is capable of suffering only to a certain degree; when the sufferings transcend that degree he faints away and dies, and becomes incapable of suffering any more. But it is not so with the heavenly felicity; belonging to eternity, it bears the nature of infinite, and is therefore incomparably greater than all the tortures and sufferings of the world. Moreover, God will hereafter impart to the elect a capability of sustaining intense joy far beyond their capability of enduring sufferings in this world. We read of several saints that they were not able to bear the joys with which God favored them sometimes here upon earth, and therefore they prayed him to take away these joys, lest they should die. The saints in heaven enjoy a far greater felicity, but they do not ask God to take it away, because on account of the particular grace imparted to them, they are capable of enjoying the interminable happiness of heaven.

(*b.*) *On account of the duration of this glory.* As all things upon earth, so sufferings and tribulations will have an end. They last sometimes for hours and days and then are over. Thus the holy martyrs were usually tortured for an hour or two, or at most for a few days; they then died and all sufferings and pains were over. Some sufferings, indeed, last for weeks, months and years, and do not forsake their victim till he dies. But it is not so with the future glory of heaven; it lasts for ever. The saints in heaven need not fear that there ever will come a time when their felicity will have an end; they enjoy it without ceasing and interruption for evermore. And it is precisely on account of its eternal duration that the happiness of heaven is incomparably greater than all the sufferings of the world, which always have an end—at least

when death comes. For this reason St. Chrysostom calls all sufferings and tribulations here below shadows and dreams, saying: "What are ten thousand years in comparison with our infinite eternity! Compared with the infinite abyss are they not like a drop? What can be compared with the eternal goods?"

Whatever afflictions, therefore, may fall to your share, console yourselves with the words of the Apostle. *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* Persevere in patience, though your sufferings be painful and lingering, heaven is worth it all; there you will be rewarded a thousand-fold for everything that you suffer here for the love of God; there you will return thanks to God for all the sufferings that he sent you during your life upon earth.

PART II.

The Apostle now speaks of the expectation of redemption and glorification by all creatures.

1. *Of the expectation of the irrational creatures*, saying that every creature, that is, all things in nature, such as animals, plants, are waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, that is, for the time when, with the glorification of the just, the whole creation shall be renewed and be translated into a better, more perfect state. And the reason of this waiting of irrational beings, the Apostle says, is because they are made subject to vanity, that is corruption, into which they came, not through their own fault, but which God permitted to come upon them on account of the sin of Adam, from which they hope to be delivered on the day of the glorification of the children of God. The Apostle compares this waiting and sighing of all creatures for redemption to the pains of labor; for as a woman, when she brings forth a child, groans and sighs on account of the pains which the birth causes, yet consoles herself and rejoices on account of the child which she brings into the world, so all creatures groan on account of their state of corruption; still they have consolation and joy on account of the hope of being once delivered and glorified. The Apostle here teaches us three truths—

(*a.*) *That in consequence of the sin of man all nature (that is all irrational creatures) lost that purity and goodness in which it came forth from the hand of God, and became contaminated.* So long as man walked in innocence, all nature was in a perfect state; everything rejoiced in its existence; blessing and pleasure were diffused over the whole earth and all creatures. "God saw all things that he had made, and they were very good."—*Gen.* 1:31.

But when our first parents sinned the curse of God came upon the earth and everything it produces. "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil thou shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."—*Gen.* 3: 17, 18. As on account of the sin of our first parents great misery came upon all men, so also upon the irrational creation; the earth lost its fertility, the three kingdoms of nature assumed many injurious things, the animals became ferocious and rebelled more or less against man; in a word, everything in creation deteriorated.

(*b.*) *That all nature sighs for redemption*, like a sick person for health—like a prisoner for liberty. Nature is not conscious of this longing and sighing, because it lacks reason; nevertheless, it is real, and manifests itself in various ways. Let us, to illustrate this, consider only a few phenomena. The plants endeavor to perfect themselves, the trees shoot forth leaves every year, bloom and bring forth fruit; when they are checked in their development, for instance, by the want of light and room, we notice with wonder how they strive to remove these impediments; they creep through crevices to get to the light and to gain room for their blossoms. Consider the animals, especially the horned cattle, do their eyes not express a certain sorrow, a grief, as if they would tell us that they do not feel well; that the ill-treatment they receive from cruel people pains them; that they sigh for a better state? This displeasure, this sorrow and grief, they also express by the voice, which is so doleful and sad. If nature could manifest its sorrow by weeping, I verily believe that every drop of dew which sparkles on a summer morning in the fields and in the meadows would be a tear of sorrow.

(*c.*) *That all nature will be renewed and transfigured.* Faith teaches us that the just will rise with glorified bodies. "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."—*I. Cor.* 15: 42, 43. And again: "He will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory."—*Phil.* 3: 21. A similar renovation and glorification of the whole world will take place at the end of time. Sin, the cause of all deterioration and of all evil, being destroyed, the omnipotence of God will cleanse, renew and transform all things into a glorified state, in which they will remain for all eternity. The burnt-up universe will arise from its ruins in a new and nobler form; the corruptible will put on incorruption, and our earth, at present a valley of tears, will be a paradise. The prince of the Apostles assures us of this, saying: "We look for new heavens and a new earth, ac-

cording to his (the Lord's) promise in which justice dwelleth."—*II. Peter* 3: 13.

2. *He speaks of the rational creatures, that is believers, saying*: "*Ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.*" The meaning of these words is: We Christians, who have the first fruits of the spirit, who are already justified and sanctified, also groan, full of longing and from the bottom of our heart, and wait for the complete adoption of the sons of God, namely, for the delivery of our body from weakness and pains, from corruptibility and death, and for its participation with the soul in the life of everlasting happiness. These words deserve our most serious consideration.

(*a.*) How do matters stand with us? Are of the number of those *who have the first fruits of the spirit?* Is there no grievous sin on our conscience? Are we in the state of grace? Oh, how wretched are Christians, who live, perhaps, for years in sin! In what danger is their salvation! They are standing, as it were, with one foot in hell. Whoever is so unfortunate as to live in the state of mortal sin, let him no longer persevere in this deplorable state, let him repent, and make a good confession, in order to save his soul from perdition.

(*b.*) How do matters stand with us? *Do we groan for the perfect adoption of the sons of God?* Have we an earnest desire for heaven? O yes, you will say, we all desire heaven, who would wish to be damned? Very well, remember the words of the Lord: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."—*Luke* 13: 24. Yes, all desire to be saved, but for want of taking sufficient pains, and not being thorcughly in earnest, all will not attain salvation. All desire to be saved, but being unwilling to bridle their passions, to give up their sinful habits and bad company, many will not be saved. All desire to be saved, but will not be saved. And why not? Because they will not do what is required for salvation. They defer their conversion and the amendment of their life from one time to another, and reject the graces which are offered them; in the meantime death comes, and they are lost. Let us therefore not put off till to-morrow what can and should be done to-day; to-morrow is an uncertain day.

(*c.*) How do matters stand with us? Do we live in such a manner *that we may hope for the redemption of our body?* Know that this hope depends on our mortifying the body and its senses, on refusing it that which is sinful, and on making it an instrument

in the service of God. Christ expressly says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself."—*Matt.* 16: 24. And the Apostle says: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God."—*Rom.* 6: 12, 13. He who indulges the lusts of the flesh hopes in vain for the redemption of his body; he will indeed rise on the last day, but will not be glorified; he will rise with an a hideous, abominable body, which, must suffer eternal torments in the fire of hell. "Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, etc." (*Col.* 3: 5), "and present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God" (*Rom.* 12: 1), that you may hope for a glorious resurrection.

PERORATION.

These are the truths and lessons which St. Paul puts before us in the epistle for this day. Let us follow them. Let us bear patiently the sufferings and tribulations of this life, and console ourselves with the thought that *the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* Being wanderers here upon earth and having no lasting city, but seeking one to come, let us lift up our spiritual eyes to that which is above; let us shun every sin and strive by the mortification of the flesh, and by fervor in the service of God, to attain our final destiny, the eternal felicity of heaven. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Gospel. *Luke* 5: 1-11. At that time: When the multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were

in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking; which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at the knees of Jesus saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon; Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

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2. HOMILETIC SKETCH.

JESUS PREACHES; THE APOSTLES LET DOWN THEIR NETS.

What is related in the gospel of this day occured at the beginning of the public life of Jesus. When at the marriage feast in Cana he changed water into wine, and afterwards performed many wonders and at the same time preached the word of God with a persuasion, eloquence and unction never before equaled, his name became famous in the whole land, and the people came in multitudes from all parts to see and to hear him, and to witness his miracles. Thus we see in the gospel of this day a great multitude of people gathered around him anxious to hear the word of God. Let us consider these two points:

I. Jesus preaches;
II. The Apostles let down their nets.

PART I.

1. The gospel says that the multitudes pressed upon him, to hear the word of God. The conduct of these people puts many modern Christians to shame. The same word of God which Christ preached is preached to-day by the living voice of his representatives, the priests. But how many do not relish the word of God and disdain it as the Jews did the manna. Instead of hearing it on Sundays and holidays, they amuse themselves, and in some places careless Christians leave the church as soon as the sermon begins, and do not return until it is over. Such persons are in a deplorable condition; they show only too plainly that they have no sense of religion, and that they are not concerned about their salvation. We need not wonder when Christ declares that those who do not hear the word of God, are not of God.—*John* 8: 47. A good, practical Catholic will not only hear mass on Sundays and holidays, but also the sermon, and will endeavor

to regulate his life accordingly, mindful of the words of Christ: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."—*Luke* 11: 28.

2. The gospel mentions the place where Jesus preached: *He stood by the lake of Genesareth.* The lake of Genesareth, also called the Sea of Galilee, was about fifteen miles long and seven miles wide; on its shore lay the village of Capharnaum, where Simon Peter and his companions, namely, his brother Andrew, and the two brothers James and John, were born. It was on the shore of this lake that Jesus stood and the multitudes pressed upon him, to hear the word of God. The country around this lake was one of the most beautiful spots in the world, a real paradise, as Flavius Josephus and other historians tell us. The shores of this lake were dotted with villages and superb villas, and many ships enlivened its waters. And what is it now? Ah, it is desolate; and upon this once lively sea you scarcely see a skiff. As Sodom and Gomorrha, so Capharnaum with the surrounding country was cursed by God and changed into a desert, because its inhabitants, notwithstanding all the miracles Jesus wrought there, remained in unbelief and sin. Therefore our Divine Saviour says: "And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? thou shalt go down even unto hell; for if in Sodom had been wronght the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained until this day."—*Matt.* 11: 23. Here we see what fatal consequences the abuse of divine grace draws after it. God departs with his grace from men who obstinately persevere in unbelief and sin, and delivers them over to temporal and eternal perdition. Guard against nothing so much as leaving the graces of God unemployed, and take to heart the words of the Apostle: "Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasureth up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God."—*Rom.* 2: 4, 5.

3. The gospel says that there were two ships standing by the lake, and going up into one of the ships that was Simon's he desired him to draw back a little from the land, and sitting down he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Why did Jesus go into the ship that was Peter's? St. Gregory sees herein a mystery, saying: "The ship into which the Saviour went is a type of the Church, which he founded on earth. As this ship belonged to Peter, so the Lord would commit to Peter the guidance of his Church, and entrust her to him, so to speak, as his property. Lastly as Christ taught his doctrine out of Peter's ship, so the pure, unadulterated doctrine of Christ is found only in the Church which has Peter for its head." If we look around in the world,

we find many religious societies or churches at variance with one another, of which each claims to be the true church established by Christ. But as truth is but one and Christ has established but one Church, there can be only one true Church. Which is this true Church? Evidently the Catholic Church; for only in it has Peter ruled in his successors for more than eighteen hundred years, and will rule until the consummation of the world, according to the promise of Jesus: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—*Matt.* 16: 18. As the people at the lake of Genesareth were obliged to turn to the ship of Peter, to hear the pure word of God, because Jesus preached only from this ship, so all who wish to arrive at the true faith must turn to the Catholic Church, because only in her, as the Church which belongs to St. Peter, does Jesus teach. We need not ask long where the true Church of Christ is; it is where Peter is, and that is in the holy Catholic Church, because she has a successor of St. Peter for her visible head. We need not inquire long whether a doctrine which some one preaches is truth or falsehood. If any one teaches otherwise than the holy Catholic Church he is a false teacher, no matter who he may be. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."—*Gal.* 1:8.

Thank God, that you have belonged to the Catholic Church from your infancy; for as only the true faith is the saving faith, you are in that Church in which alone you can be saved. Do not suffer yourselves to be led astray from your faith by irreligious discourses and writings; but adhere to it constantly and firmly, till you draw your last breath.

But live also according to the principle of your holy faith; to believe as a Catholic and to live as a Catholic makes the true Catholic, and that is the faith that opens for us the portals of heaven.

PART II.

The Apostles let down their nets; this is the second point of which the gospel of this day speaks.

1. Jesus, having finished his discourse, commanded Peter to launch out into the deep and to let down his nets for a draught. But Peter said: *Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net.* In this occurrence many important truths are contained, of which we will consider a few:—

(*a.*) Peter and his associates belonged to a very lowly class; they were fishermen, and yet our Saviour chose them for

his Apostles, and conferred on them the highest dignity in his Church. Peter and his companions had already been disciples of Jesus for some time, yet they occasionally engaged in fishing. Jesus did not rebuke them for this, on the contrary, he takes occasion from their business to point to their higher calling, and even commanded them to launch out into the deep and to let down their nets.

From this we perceive that worldly affairs, if not sinful, are compatible with the service of God and that one can be saved in any state of life. It is not necessary for us to change our state of life in order to serve God. He who does not serve God in his own state of life would hardly serve him in another. The many labors which are inseparable from any position are no obstacle to the service of God, for he who does his work patiently and with a good intention, serves God and acquires great merit for heaven. Neither do your affairs hinder you in the fulfilling of your religious duties, for you always have time enough for your private devotions, to attend church on Sundays and holidays, and to receive the sacraments. It is also not impossible for you frequently during the day to recollect yourselves and to raise your hearts to God by short aspirations and prayers. If you serve God as you can serve him in your state of life, you are on the right road to heaven.

(*b.*) Peter and his associates had labored the whole night, but caught nothing. What was the reason of this fruitless labor? Not the time, for the night is the most appropriate time for fishing; not the fishermen, for they had fished from their youth and understood it thoroughly; neither can it be said that they were wanting in diligence. The only reason of their fruitless labor was that the blessing of God was wanting. Where this is wanting, every human exertion is vain, as David says: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."—*Ps.* 126: 1. God would withdraw his blessing from them for a time, in order to impart it to them more abundantly after awhile.

When God withdraws his blessing from you in your labors and undertakings, examine and see whether you are not the cause of it yourselves. He who neglects prayer and his religious duties, commits injustices, or otherwise leads a sinful life, is frequently without the blessing of God, so that with all his energy and exertion, and with all his prudence he can make no progress. If your conscience does not reproach you, and if your undertakings nevertheless do not succeed, do not despond on that account. God, who witholds his blessing from you for a time, will impart it to you, as to the Apostles, later; and if you should miss this blessing, be convinced that it is for your good. God loves you,

and therefore denies you that which you consider to be an egg, but which in reality is a scorpion.

(*c.*) The words of Peter, *We have labored all the night, and have taken nothing,* deserve our attention in particular, if we apply them to the business of our salvation. If we wish to get to heaven, we must perform good works, for "every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire."—*Matt.* 3: 10. For a work to be meritorious, two things are required: the *state of grace,* and a *good intention.* Even the most excellent works done in the state of sin are without merit for heaven. Thus St. Paul says that without love the gift of all our goods to the poor and even martyrdom are fruitless.—*I. Cor.* 13. No doubt there are many in hell who performed more good works than some saints who are in heaven, but because they did all their good works in the state of sin it profited them nothing; they were cast away. How deplorable then are those Christians who for long years, perhaps the greater part of their life, live in grievous sin! All their prayers, all their labor, all their sufferings and exercises of virtue, in short, all their good works, are lost for eternity. Should not this be a sufficient reason for us to fly from sin more than from persons infected with the plague, or if we should be so unfortunate as to fall into mortal sin, with the help of God to rise at once from our fall and by a good confession to restore ourselves to the state of grace? But to render our works meritorious for eternal life it is also necessary to perform them *with a good intention.* All the good we do, we must do on account of God, because he wills it, in order to please him, for his honor. He who in his good works sets God aside, and only performs them from worldly motives, for the sake of some advantage or gain, or to be honored by men, to gain the praise and the applause of the world, need not expect the least reward in heaven; to him apply the words which Jesus spoke to the Pharisees: "They have received their reward."—*Matt.* 6: 2. On the contrary, the least and most insignificant good works, even those which are indifferent in themselves, become meritorious if they are performed with a good intention. "Whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name . . . Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Mark* 9: 40.

(*d.*) Peter showed no ill humor or displeasure at the uselessness of his labor. Calmly and resignedly he said: *Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net.* This example of St. Peter is certainly very humiliating for many Christians, who when they do not succeed well with their work, become angry and break out into curses and blasphemies. Such irritable, impatient people not

only prevent the divine blessing, but they also lose the merit which by patience at their work they might acquire before God, and draw punishment upon themselves. Not so with you, my brethren; be patient at your work, guard against anger, and take care that no sinful word escapes your lips. If from hastiness you may have spoken an abusive word, or cursed, repent of it at once, and say in your heart a prayer to God, for instance: "Glory to be the Father", etc.

2. At the request and command of Jesus they cast their nets again at this time with the greatest success, for *they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking.* This wonderful occurence is very instructive for us.

(*a.*) As the Apostles were not successful till after they had heard the sermon, we see the words of Christ corroborated: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Matt.* 6: 33. If we are solicitous for our spiritual welfare, God will give us what we need for life; he will give, if not riches and affluence, at least as much as will be necessary. And though we may sometimes be reduced to need, God will not forsake us; he only tries us, as he tried Job and a thousand others, and will permit us to see better days again. Let it therefore be your first and principal business to serve God and to be solicitous for your spiritual welfare: cast all your care upon him, for he will have care of you.

(*b.*) The disciples in the other ship give us a beautiful example of the affectionate and active love of our neighbor. Far from envying Peter on account of the great draught and rejoicing when they saw that his net broke, they came at once and helped to draw in the net and bring the fish into the ships. Never look with envious eyes upon the good fortune and prosperity of others, never grudge anyone what he possesses; rejoice when things are well with him, have compassion with him when evil befalls him, and assist him whenever he needs your help.

(*c.*) Significant is the circumstance that the great draught broke the net and put both ships in danger of sinking; for this circumstance tells us, that even the greatest prosperity is not without danger, and that here below joys and tribulations are frequently sisters. It often happens that man in the very moment we believe he has obtained his end and imagines himself happy, sees his prosperity burst like a soap bubble. Moderate therefore your joy in the days of prosperity and attach your

heart to no earthly things, since nothing under the sun is stable. Seek the goods which can never be lost owing to the dulness of the times, and strive to become rich in virtues and good works, for these are the true treasures which even beyond the grave have value, and merit eternal salvation.

3. The gospel tells us that Peter, after the wonderful draught of fishes, fell down at Jesus' knees saying: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,* and that Christ calmed him with the words: *Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

(*a.*) Peter was not a sinful man in the sense that grievous sins were upon his conscience; he was a righteous, God-fearing man and adhered to his Master with all his soul. When he calls himself a sinful man, he does so from humility; penetrated by a lively knowledge of his misery and his nothingness, he deemed himself unworthy to be near Jesus, the infinitely Mighty and Holy. Let us learn from this not to be vain and proud in prosperity, but to ascribe the good we have, or think we have, not to ourselves, but to the unmerited grace of God. Consider what the Apostle says: "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"—*I. Cor.* 4: 7. Let us imitate the saints, who humbled themselves the more before God, the more graces they received from him.

(*b.*) Our Lord was pleased with Peter's humility and rewarded it with a special grace, for he assigned to him now a higher calling than he had followed hitherto; he was no longer to catch fish, but men; he should by word and miracles lead souls into the Church and to heaven. You all must catch men, every one his own way; you must strive to assist your fellow-men in obtaining their eternal salvation. Christian charity requires this of you.

PERORATION.

What effect had this great miracle of the draught of fishes upon the Apostles? They brought their ships to land and leaving all things, they followed him. *What a readiness* to follow the invitation of our Lord at once, without any hesitation and objection! *What a decision* of character to give up their business entirely in order to be able to devote themselves to their new calling. What a willingness to sacrifice everything that has value in the eyes of men, house, business, family, and to follow Jesus! Oh, let us also make every sacrifice which our divine Saviour requires of us, and let us follow him, that his words may be fulfilled

in us: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting."—*Matt.* 19: 29.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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3. DOGMATICAL SKETCH.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's he desired him to draw back a little from the land, and sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship.—*Luke* 5: 3.

These words are significant. According to the Fathers, the ship of Simon Peter signifies the Church; and the fact that Christ taught out of Simon's ship, gives us to understand that the true, divine doctrine is found only in that Church which belongs to Peter. This Church, as history proves, is no other than the Catholic Church; for only in her does Peter continue to live in his successors, the Roman Bishops, throughout all centuries until the consummation of the world. The Bishop of Rome or the Pope for the time being is the true Peter, not in person, but in dignity; for he possesses the same power and dignity with which Christ invested Peter as the chief pastor of his Church, and by a special grace he is infallible in matters of faith and morals, as was Peter. I shall speak to-day and next Sunday of this dogma, which was defined in the Vatican Council at Rome in the year 1870. To-day I shall give you an explanation in regard to the infallibility of the Pope, by answering the three following questions:

I. In what is the Pope infallible?
II. When is he infallible?
III. How is he infallible?

Part I.

The Vatican Council states that, "When the Roman Pontiff decides a *doctrine concerning faith and morals*, he possesses

that infallibility with which the Divine Saviour would have his Church endowed." According to this explanation and definition of the Vatican Council, the infallibility of the Pope does not refer—

1. *To his private life and conduct,* but only to *his official capacity as universal Teacher and Doctor,* and means that in such teaching he cannot err. The enemies of the Church and of the Pope endeavored to spread an erroneous opinion among the people that the Vatican Council attributed infallibility to the Pope in the sense that he could make no mistake, and that he could not sin. They confounded *infallibility with impeccability* and strove to disseminate this error for the purpose of making the doctrine of the infallibility appear odious to every one. But never was an attempt more abortive. The Vatican Council never dreamed of such a thing as claiming impeccability for the Pope, much less of pronouncing it a dogma. The Pope is no more than St. Peter, who, as he could sin, after becoming Pope, so every other Pope may have his faults and can commit sin; he is a child of Adam, and therefore can abuse his free will to commit sin, like any other man. The Pope is called "Holy Father" or "His Holiness" only on account of the exalted dignity and holiness of his office, as we also address temporal rulers with the appellations: "Your Majesty," "His Royal Highness," "His Excellency the Governor." The infallibility attributed to him by the Council has nothing at all do with his private life and conduct. He may, as a private theologian, write a book containing errors even against faith and morals, But when speaking *ex cathedra,* that is, officially, he can never err either in faith or morals. And as priests can preach the word of God and administer the sacraments whether they live piously or not, so the Pope can be infallible, no matter whether his private life is saintly or not exactly what it ought to be. Infallibility belongs to the gifts of grace which God imparts to the Popes, not directly for their own salvation, but for the good of their fellow-men. There were however but very few Popes who did not lead a holy life.

2. *Nor to temporal affairs.* If some represent the definition of the Vatican Council as an encroachment on the rights of princes and nations, as a dangerous and pernicious doctrine, and say that the infallible Pope may judge and decide everything—sanction or reject constitutions of states and civil laws, hinder princes in the exercise of their rights, depose them, or oblige subjects to refuse obedience to them—this again is nothing but untruth and calumny. The Pope, whose only solicitude is for the eternal salvation of men, does not meddle with politics and temporal affairs; he prescribes nothing in the temporal legislation

and administration of any government; he does not command governments to make war or peace; in temporal things he allows every one to do as he pleases. It is only in the event of something being commanded or forbidden contrary to the law of God, that he would, and of course ought to raise his voice against it, not by reason of his infallibility, but as the head of the Church; in which capacity he has the right and the duty to watch over the salvation of the faithful and to prevent the violation of divine law by all the means in his power.

3. *Nor to natural and profane or secular sciences.* There exist among the learned the most divergent and often the most contradictory views and opinions in matters of science; that which some assert, others deny. The Pope lets them alone so long as they remain in their own sphere. But the moment they go outside and broach opinions in opposition to divine revelation, he raises his voice and condemns their errors, and there is not the least doubt that he will do so in future; for it is his bounden duty to God and man to preserve the deposit of faith pure and undefiled, and to guard the faithful against error.

4. The infallibility of the Pope extends only to matters of faith and morals, that is, to what we are to believe and to do, in order to please God and to be saved. It belongs to the whole teaching Church, and it belongs to the Pope, infallibly to declare and to define what is revealed by God. But in matters of faith and morals neither the Pope nor the Church ordains and propounds new doctrines and new laws of morality but only such as are already contained in divine revelation. Divine revelation is an accomplished fact, consequently nothing can be added or taken away. It is the province of the Pope, as well as of the Church, to preserve the revealed truths of religion, to defend them, to establish their true sense and application, to reject and condemn the opposite doctrines and assertions as errors. It is therefore a very foolish, absurd, and groundless assertion that the Pope can define doctrines concerning faith and morals just as he pleases.

Part II.

When the Pope is infallible, the Vatican Council tells us in these words: He is infallible *when he speaks ex cathedra, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as Head of the Church, as Chief Pastor and Teacher of all the faithful, he declares what is to be held by the Universal Church as the true doctrine on any matter of faith or morals.* According to this definition the Pope is not infallible in all cases, but only in particular ones.

1. First of all we must distinguish between the Pope as a *private person*, and the Pope as the *Head of the Church*. As a private person he is as little infallible as any other human being. Many Popes were very learned men and wrote excellent works on religious matters. These writings have no more claim to infallibility than the writings of other theologians. The same may be said of their addresses, allocutions, and sermons, they need not be held as the infallible word of God. The words of the Pope are always to be received with the respect due to his high authority, but it would be going a little too far to say that whatever the Pope speaks, writes, or ordains, should be considered as the infallible, divine truth.

2. The Pope is infallible only when he speak *ex cathedra*, or as the Vatican Council adds by way of explanation: When, in the exercise of his office as the Head of the Church, and Chief-Pastor and Teacher of all the faithful, he declares what is to be held by the Universal Church as the true doctrine on any matter of faith or morals. That any decision of the Pope may be considered as being given *ex cathedra*—

(*a.*) It must concern *faith or morals*, for in this only the Pope is infallible.

(*b.*) The decision must not be merely an assertion, but a judicial sentence or judgment, a final decision. If the Pope in matters of faith or morals were to make an assertion without obliging the whole Catholic world to receive it, we should not be bound to accept such an assertion as infallible.

(*c.*) The sentence must be such a one as regards the Universal Church, that is, which the whole Catholic world must accept and hold. If it concerns only individual persons, the Pope is not infallible, because infallibility is attributed to the Pope by the Vatican Council only when what he defines or decides is a law binding all Christendom.

PART III.

How the Pope is infallible, the Vatican Council tells us, saying that the Pope, by virtue of the divine assistance promised to him in St. Peter, possesses infallibility, and that therefore his decisions of themselves, and not through the consent of the Church, become unalterable.

1. The Pope possesses infallibility *only by virtue of a special divine assistance*. If the Pope were left to himself and depending

on himself, there could be no thought of infallibility, though he might excel by science and piety in the most eminent degree; for history teaches us that even the most learned and the most pious men become entangled in errors. Example: Fenelon. We know that the Pope and the bishops together, that is, the teaching Church, are infallible, because Jesus promised them his and the Holy Ghost's assistance for all time. The same holds good of the Pope alone, because, as we shall hear next Sunday, he has God's special assistance, making him infallible in matters of faith and morals. In order to be infallible, he need not be omniscient nor even very learned, for Peter and the other Apostles were neither omniscient nor learned, and yet, as no Catholic will deny, they possessed infallibility. It is therefore a foolish and malicious calumny for the enemies of our faith to say that we Catholics make the Pope God because we attribute to him infallibility.

2. The decisions of the Pope *of themselves, not through the consent of the Church, are final and infallible.* This is a necessary corollary of the Papal infallibility. If the consent of the Church were necessary, there could be no longer any question of the infallibility of the Pope, for in this case the consent of the Church would render the decision of the Pope infallible. It is indeed true that the consent of the Church will never be wanting to the decisions of the Pope in matters of faith and morals, but it is not this consent that makes the decision of the Pope infallible; on the contrary, the Church consents to such a decision because the Pope is infallible. The infallibility of the Pope does not rest on the consent of the Church, but the consent of the Church rests on the infallibility of the Pope.

3. *The decisions of the Pope in matters of faith and morals are unalterable.* I say, decisions in matters of faith and morals; for laws and ordinances in other matters may be changed or repealed. The reason is because in these matters infallibility is not attributed to the Pope, and because such laws and ordinances are made only with regard to particular circumstances, and therefore, if the circumstances change, the ordinances also suffer a change or may be abolished altogether. Thus Pope Clement XIV. retrenched many holidays because the circumstances of the times seemed to require it. But the case is quite different with the definitions and decisions in matters of faith and morals. In these the Pope is infallible; they are the unerring divine truth, and therefore unalterable, according to Christ's saying: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass."—*Matt.* 24 : 35. It is an impossibility for a Pope or a General Council to repeal decisions once given in matters of faith or morals; once pronounced and decided they always remain in force, and no

succeeding Pope or future Council can change or alter anything.

PERORATION.

I have now explained to you the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope that you may have no erroneous ideas about it, and at the same time be in a position to refute the errors and misrepresentations which are brought against it in speeches and writings. Let us thank God that he has fortified the Pope with the gift of infallibility in teaching; for this gift is given him only for our good. Let any error whatever arise against our holy faith, let even such as call themselves Catholics, learned doctors, priding themselves on their knowledge, make war against the Church, we can live in peace, for we can say: Whatever our Holy Father the Pope proposes to us to believe and to do is divine truth; whatever contradicts his teaching is error and falsehood. Do not suffer yourselves to be led astray by the enemies of the Church; adhere to the Pope and to the bishops united with him, that you may preserve the precious treasure of faith, and as good Catholic Christians obtain salvation. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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4. LITURGICAL SKETCH.

THE ELECTION AND CORONATION OF THE POPE.

Jesus went into one of the ships that was Simon's.—Luke 5: 3.

It was not without good reason that Christ chose of the two ships standing by the lake that which was Simon's, went into it, and sitting, taught the multitudes out of the ship. He wished thereby to indicate that he abides and teaches only in that Church in which Peter is. But this Church is no other than the Catholic Church, which Peter has governed and ruled in the person of his successors more than eighteen hundred years, and will govern and rule to the end of time. Peter was the first head of the Church, the first Pope, whom Christ himself elevated to that dignity, and he has been succeeded in an unbroken line by one

Pope after another, down to Leo XIII., our present Sovereign Pontiff. I shall speak to-day—

I. Of the election of the Pope;
II. Of the coronation of the Pope.

Part I.

In the first Christian centuries all the Roman people participated in the election of the Pope. Pope Symmachus, however, at the beginning of the sixth century, ordained that a new Pope must be elected only by the Roman clergy. Afterwards the election of the Pope was limited to the Cardinals.

1. According to an ordinance of Gregory X., 1274, which is still in force, ten days after the death of the Pope the Cardinals enter into Conclave and proceed to the election of a new Pope. By Conclave is understood the place where the election of the Pope takes place. Either the Vatican or the Quirinal is chosen by the Cardinals for this purpose. Then small separate compartments are temporarily constructed of wood for the Cardinals, having room only for a bed, table, chair, writing desk, and a few other small articles of plain furniture.

2. The Cardinals having arrived proceed (if the Conclave is to be held in the Vatican) to the Sixtine Chapel, where the bulls relative to the election of the Pope are read and sworn to by them. From the morning of the second day they can not leave the Conclave till after the election of a Pope. All doors and windows towards the outside are walled up, with the exception of one door through which the Cardinals who live at a distance from Rome and may perhaps arrive later can enter the Conclave, or a Cardinal who falls sick can be taken out. In this door there is one window, by means of which the Cardinals can give audience to foreign ambassadors in very urgent cases. The refreshments sent into the Conclave are carefully examined by a prelate, so that no letters or other communication may be surreptitiously brought in. The entrance thereto is also strongly guarded by soldiers. The reason why the Conclave is so strictly cut off from the outside world is evident. The Cardinals must be entirely free and independent from all outside pressure and influence, and elect the Pope according to their conscience. If it should happen that the Cardinals, on account of disturbances, or any other reason, can not elect the Pope in Rome, they may hold the Conclave somewhere else. Thus Pius VII. was elected at Venice, March 10th, 1800, because Rome was occupied at the time by the French.

3. On the second day of the Conclave the Mass of the Holy Ghost is said in the Sixtine Chapel, during which all the Cardinals receive communion. The meetings for casting the votes also take places here, beginning on the third day; they are held twice a day, at six o'clock in the morning, and at two in the afternoon.

The election of the Pope may be effected in three different ways; first, by the Cardinals unanimously proclaiming some one as Pope without any deliberation; secondly, by the Cardinals leaving their votes to a committee of one or more of their body, agreeing that this committee, in the name of all, shall have power to elect a Pope; and thirdly, by every Cardinal giving in his vote. The last mentioned method is the most common. He who is lawfully to become Pope must have two-thirds of the votes. If no one receives two-thirds of the votes at the first ballot, the sealed voting papers are burned. In a corner of the chapel there is a charcoal fire in connection with a flue through which the smoke arising fromthe burnt papers is conducted into the air. The people at six o'clock a. m., and two o'clock p. m., watch outside and conclude, as often as they see fresh smoke, that the voting papers are burnt, and that consequently no new Pope is yet elected. The next ballot, if the preceding one has been unsuccessful, takes place on the following forenoon or afternoon.

4. As soon as two-thirds of the votes are in favor of one, the election of the Pope is decided. If the Pope-elect is among the Cardinals of the Conclave, the Cardinal-deacon asks him whether he will accept the election. The Pope-elect then kneels down and prays, after which he gives his declaration. If he is outside of the Conclave, a solemn embassy is at once deputed to him. Many Popes allowed themselves only with reluctance to be elevated to the chair of St. Peter. The reason is obvious, for the greater the honor and dignity, the greater the burden and the greater also the responsibility before the Divine Judge.

The newly-elected Pope changes his name. The reason is because our Divine Saviour gave another name to the Apostle Simon and called him Peter, when he made him the head of the Church. The new Pope, after putting on the papal vestments, receives from the Cardinals in the Sixtine Chapel the first homage, which consists in the kissing of the hand and an embrace, repeated twice. Then the Cardinal Camerlengo puts the new Fisherman's ring on his finger. The ring is the symbol of marriage. As the bridegroom gives the bride a ring as a sign that they are now wedded, so the bishops and the Pope receive a ring in token of their spiritual marriage with the Church as their bride and their inseparable union with her. The Fisherman's

ring belongs exclusively to the Pope, and is so called because on it St- Peter is represented as standing in a ship and letting the net down into the sea.

5. Then the election is publicly proclaimed. The first Cardinal-deacon preceded by the papal cross goes forth upon the balcony over the portal of the palace, and exclaims with a loud voice: "I announce to you a great joy; we have a Pope in the person of His Eminence and most reverend Lord N. N., who has taken the name N." Immediately the booming of cannon is heard from the castle of St. Angelo, all the bells of Rome ring out upon the open air, and the Swiss guards at their post give artillery salutes in token of joy. The new Pope receives from the Cardinals in the Sixtine Chapel the second homage, after which he is carried upon a superb *Sedia* into St. Peter's Church, where, while the *Te Deum* is chanted, he receives as the third homage the kissing of the foot. After that he gives the papal benediction and returns to his palace.

Part II.

The Coronation of the Pope takes place six or eight days after his election, on a Sunday or holiday. This Coronation is not a worldly ceremonial, but a religious act, and therefore a Sunday or holiday is chosen for it, a custom dating back to the earliest times.

1. The new Pope is carried in the solemn procession composed of all the spiritual and temporal dignitaries of Rome by twelve pages, upon a superb *Sedia,* into the church of St. Peter, because this Church is dedicated to Peter, the first Pope, appointed by Christ himself, and because his sacred remains rest there. At the principal portal of this church stands a throne under a rich canopy, which the Pope ascends and there receives the homage of all the clergy of St. Peter's. He then goes into the church, prays before the altar, and proceeds to the chapel of St. Gregory, where all the Cardinals and the other prelates pay him homage; Tierce is then chanted. When the procession leaves the chapel, the Master of the Ceremonies approaches the Pope and burns upon a plate a palace made of paper and other combustible things, saying with a loud voice: "Holy Father, thus passes away the glory of the world." He repeats this three times at intervals. This ceremony is an earnest admonition to the Pope that, mindful of the vanity of everything earthly, he may not be blinded by worldly pomp and splendor, but have continually before his eyes his exalted position as head of the Church, and administer his office in humility and holiness. The solemn procession moves

now to the High Altar in St. Peter's, on which the solemn Coronation Mass is celebrated. After the *Kyrie* the Pope sits down upon the throne, the three first Cardinal-bishops approach him, saying a prayer in which they ask God to shower upon him the plenitude of his blessing. After that he receives the Pallium from the first Cardinal-deacon. This is a white band, about a hand's breath, made of lamb's wool, and is worn on the shoulders and hangs down in front; it is interwoven with white and black crosses. The Pallium is a sign of the papal dignity and of the plenitude of the Episcopal power; the right to give it belongs exclusively to the Pope. The Pope as Chief Pastor of the Church and head of the bishops always and everywhere wears the Pallium; the Archbishops are allowed to wear it only on certain festivals and at certain solemnities within their dioceses. The Pallium is an admonition to the Pope to be solicitous for the welfare of the flock entrusted to him, according to the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Immediately before the epistle of the solemn Mass of Coronation, the first Cardinal-deacon with the clergy descends into the subterranean chapel, where the relics of St. Peter and St. Paul rest, in order to pray there for the Pope. The epistle and gospel are chanted both in Latin and Greek, to indicate that the Pope is the head of the Church of the East and the West.

2. After the solemn High Mass the Coronation takes place. The Pope is carried in solemn procession upon the *Sedia* under the canopy; the procession moves amidst the loud acclamations of the people to the balcony over the portal of St. Peter's; on reaching it, the Pope sits down upon a throne erected there, which can be seen by the vast multitude of people who cover the great square of St. Peter's. Before the Coronation the Cardinal-deacon, the Bishop of Ostia, with two Cardinal-deacons, prays over the new Pope, supplicating God to grant him a happy reign. The prayer being ended, the first Cardinal-deacon takes the mitre from his head, and assisted by a *Cardinal-deacon* puts on the triple golden crown, called the tiara, with the words: "Receive the triple-crowned tiara, and know that thou art the *Father of Princes and Kings, the Ruler of the Universe,* and the *Vicar of Jesus Christ,* to whom be honor and glory for ever. Amen." The first Pope who wore this triple crown was Clement V., who died in 1314. It is a symbol of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the threefold supreme power, which the Pope unites in his person; for he is the *Chief Teacher, Priest,* and *Shepherd.* Significant also is the cry of the people at the coronation of the Pope; they are not jubilant; they pray, saying, *Kyrie eleison,* "Lord, have mercy on him." The faithful think of the heavy burden and the great responsibility of the Pope, for this reason

they pray to God to have mercy on him, to assist him in the administration of his exalted office, and to be propitious to him in life and death. After the coronation the Pope prays for himself and all Christendom and then gives the people his blessing. To this papal benediction is joined a plenary indulgence, which all those gain who have worthily received the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, and who recite the usual prayers. After receiving from the Cardinal-deacon in the name of all the Cardinals their congratulations and good wishes for a long and happy reign, the Pope returns to his palace.

A few days after his coronation the Pope assembles the Cardinals, expresses to them his thanks for the election, and requests them to assist and support him to the best of their ability in the discharge of his difficult duties. Then he publishes a Jubilee for all Christendom, to implore the blessing of God on his reign. Sixtus V. was the first who proclaimed a Jubilee on his accession to the throne and all Popes have since followed his example.

PERORATION.

These are the principal ceremonies by which the Coronation of the Pope is attended. It is done in the most solemn manner, for the Pope is endowed with the highest dignity upon earth. He is the Vicar of Christ, the head of the Church; his empire extends farther than of any potentate, for it is spread over the whole Catholic world, consisting of two hundred and fifty millions of souls. Great is his power, for Christ having given him the keys of heaven, what he binds is bound, what he looses is loosed. To him all Catholics must submit in matters of faith and morals; he who does not acknowledge and revere him as the Head of the Church, ceases to be a member of the Catholic Church; he is a branch separated from the vine. Let us consider this and obey our Holy Father the Pope in all things which concern our salvation, that as good Catholics we may obtain salvation. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

5. SYMBOLICAL SKETCH.

OUR LIFE HERE BELOW, A SHIP.

He saw two ships standing by the lake.—Luke 5: 2.

The gospel of this days relates that Jesus went into one of the ships that was Simon's, and taught the multitudes out of the ship. The ship is a symbol of the Church, for as ships sometimes sail along smoothly on the sea, and sometimes encounter violent storms, so the Church has periods of peace and rest, but also periods of storms and persecutions. She has been making her voyage on the ocean of the world for the last eighteen hundred years, and, during that long time, war and peace have succeeded each other. At present she is most sorely oppressed and persecuted, but let us have confidence; as the storms on the sea cease to rage, so the present persecutions will sooner or later end, and the Church will again enjoy the blessings of peace. Such is our life upon earth, and we may say that the ship is a symbol of our life. I say then, *Our life upon earth is like a ship.*

I. It is a passenger-ship;
II. It is a man-of-war;
III. It is a merchantman.

PART I.

1. Many ships are intended for no other purpose than to convey persons from one place to another. Such ships you will find in all seaports. They are on the sea from the beginning of the year to the end of it; as soon as they have made one voyage, for instance, from Europe to America, they return from America to Europe. Many of these ships make their trips on certain days, and from port to port like the post on shore.

Our life here below is nothing else than a ship. Our life and all things pass away "as a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof when it is gone by the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in waters."—*Wisd.* 5: 10. Ah, how frail, how perishable is life! We all must say with David, "We are sojourners before thee (O Lord), and strangers, as were all our fathers. Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no stay."—*I. Paral.* 29: 15. And yet there are Christians who are more

solicitous for this fleeting earthly life than for eternal life. For the sake of temporal things they labor and toil early and late, hunger and thirst, watch through the whole night, encounter numberless dangers, but for the eternal goods they will make no sacrifice. When one says to them: You must control your anger, give up your enmity, renounce your sinful company, restore ill-gotten goods, avoid immoderate drinking and gambling, they answer: I cannot resolve to do that, it is too hard. What blindness! O Christians, act like rational men, be solicitous only for the one thing necessary, considering the words of Jesus: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul."—*Matt* 16: 26.

2. On account of different circumstances and accidents, ships need sometimes a longer, sometimes a shorter time, to make the voyage and arrive at the port to which are they bound. In former days, when none but sailing vessels were known, it took several months to go from Europe to America, but now-a-days on steamships the same voyage is made in a few weeks, nay, in a few days. It is so with human life upon earth. In the first ages of the world the people needed a long time to finish their life's journey, for, as Bible history tells us, some reached the age of eight and nine hundred years. But after the deluge, the age of men declined, so that even in David's time it was nearly as it is now, for he says in one of his psalms (89: 10): "The days of our years are three score and ten years, but if in the strong they be four score years, and what is more of them is labor and sorrow." —*Ps.* 89: 10. Many do not need seventy or eighty years to finish their course; they finish in forty or fifty, in fact, with some it goes as quickly as on a steamboat, and in ten, twenty, or thirty years they arrive at the shore of eternity. But no one knows whether his journey will come to an end sooner or later. Nothing is more uncertain than the time of death. Many make plans for the distant future, and behold death comes quite unexpectedly and spoils all their calculations; it happens to them as to the man in the gospel, who, in order to garner his rich harvest, enlarged his barn, expecting to enjoy his wealth for many years, but whose soul was summoned that very night into eternity. Life being so short and the end of it so uncertain, what is more necessary than that you should be prepared for your departure into eternity every day and every hour? How unfortunate would you be if death should overtake you in the state of sin! You would be lost for ever. Oh, think seriously of this, and shun nothing so much as sin. If perhaps you have lived for some time in grievous sins, remain no longer in this dangerous state; cleanse your conscience without delay by a good confession, and save your soul.

3. Ships often make a prosperous voyage and arrive safely at their destination; but sometimes the voyage is not prosperous owing to storms, and to accidents such as collisions, or fire, and they perish. We are continually reading of shipwrecks, and hundreds of people lose their lives every year. Such is the life of man upon earth. Some are fortunate and reach their happy destination; others, on the contrary, are unfortunate and perish eternally; the latter, alas! will form the great majority, for Jesus twice said: "Many are called, but few are chosen." It is not in the power of the ship to avert destruction, but it is in our power to protect ourselves from eternal perdition; for God has laid before us life and death, heaven and hell; it is left to our own free choice; whatever we choose will be given us.—*Deut.* 30: 19. Who of us would not choose life and felicity? Who of us would not walk with the small number of the faithful servants of God on the rough aud narrow way of mortification, and self-denial, that he may enter into life everlasting?

PART II.

1. There are also men-of-war, because war is waged not only on land but also on the sea. All great powers and maritime governments have ships of war, in order to defend their rights and interests at sea. Such ships are built more substantially than others and are provided with everything required for war.

With such a vessel we may compare our life, for as long as we sojourn here upon earth we are obliged to fight against the enemies of our salvation, as Job says (7: 1): "The life of man upon earth is a warfare." We must fight against the devil, who as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour."—*I. Peter* 5: 8. We must fight against the world, "for all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—*I. John* 2: 16; we must fight against the flesh, that domestic foe, which is the confederate of Satan and always watching to betray us into his hands. "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death."—*James* 1: 14, 15.

2. Men-of-war are so armed that they are fit for battle and are able to avert hostile attacks. This is also the case with us: God enables us to overcome all the enemies of our salvation, for, as the Apostle says "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.—*I. Cor.* 10: 13.

3. Men-of-war are iron-clad, so that no attack of the enemy can hurt and no gun can sink them. What a coat of mail is to the man-of-war, *prayer* is to us. If in temptation we have recourse to God and pray fervently, he will come to our assistance, as he himself assures us: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee."—*Ps.* 49: 15. And if God be with us, what can the whole power of hell do against us? St. Chrysostom says: "Prayer is a powerful weapon which wards off all the attacks of the devils; a means of protection, which preserves us from all dangers; a secure port, which receives us in all storms; and a treasure which supplies us with all goods." And St. Bernard: "The power of hell is great, indeed; but prayer is more powerful than all the devils, because by prayer the soul obtains the aid of God, surpassing by far all created power."

4. War-ships are provided with guns by which they are enabled to defend themselves against the enemy. The word of God furnishes us with such guns against all the assaults of our spiritual enemies. What means did Jesus employ for the overcoming of the three-fold temptation of Satan? As you know, nothing else than the word of God. Make use of this means in every temptation; "for the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword" (*Heb.* 4: 12), which inflicts such heavy strokes upon all the enemies of salvation that they render them powerless. If you are tempted to *pride*, call to mind the words of St. James: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (*James* 4: 6)—to *impurity*, think of the words of St. Paul, "be not deceived, neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . . shall possess the kingdom of God" (*I. Cor.* 6: 9, 10.)—to *injustice*, remember the words of the same Apostle, "know you not, that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God"—to *implacability*, think of the words of Christ: "If you will not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive you."—*Mark* 11: 26. In short, whatever temptation you may suffer, direct your thoughts at once to the word of God, and consider what it promises or threatens, that you may be filled with a holy fear and may abstain from sin.

5. There are soldiers on war-ships, who assist in the fighting. The Blessed Virgin possesses greater power than a whole army in battle array for our protection against all the enemies of our souls, for she is, as the Church says of her, "terrible as an army set in array."—*Canticle* 6: 3. What glorious victories did not Christians, under the protection of Mary, gain at all times over the most powerful enemies! The seventh of October, 1571, witnessed one of the most terrible naval engagements recorded in history, the famous battle at Lepanto. The Turks, in the sure

hope of victory, their fleet being much superior to that of the Christians, made the attack with the utmost violence. For several hours the conflict all along the line was awful, and victory uncertain. But all Christendom had recourse to the Blessed Virgin and prayed for help against the arch-enemy of the Christian name. The courage, confidence, and intrepidity displayed by the Christian soldiers who fought under the banner of the Blessed Virgin, seconded by a strong and favorable breeze which arose just at the beginning of the battle and carried clouds of smoke towards the Turks, gave the Christians a decisive victory. The fierce Ottomans lost in that memorable action thirty-five thousand soldiers, with their admiral and chief officers, fifteen thousand Christian slaves, about two hundred and fifty men-of-war and galleys, three hundred and seventy-two large guns, and an immense booty with which their vessels were loaded. As a perpetual remembrance of this glorious victory, Pope Pius V. added to the Litany of Loretto the invocation: "Help of Christians, pray for us." But Mary assists those who venerate her, not only in material, but also in spiritual battles, and takes them under her maternal protection in all the attacks of their spiritual enemy. The first pages of the Bible prove what power Mary possesses over Satan. There God says: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman . . she shall crush thy head."—*Gen.* 3 : 15. The Blessed Virgin still continues to crush the head of this infernal serpent by frustrating his attempts to destroy souls. St. Bernard says: "Like a chained slave, the devil must obey the commands of the Blessed Virgin." Another spiritual writer says: "As men fall to the ground with terror when lightning strikes near them, so the devils fall down with anguish when they hear the name of Mary." Hence Albert the Great says: "My children, if the devil attacks you, have recourse to Mary, look up to her and take courage."

PART III.

Most ships on the sea are merchantmen for the purposes of commerce, carrying the products of nature and art from one country to the other. Such a merchantman is our life, but the goods with which we must load our ship of life are *good works*.

1. If a merchant did not load his ships with goods, but let them go empty from one place to another, he would certainly act very foolishly and his ruin would be inevitable. If he desires to earn his livelihood and to become prosperous and wealthy, he must load his ships and sell his goods to the best advantage. This also applies to us. If we wish one day to enter into heaven, we must be solicitous to become rich in good works. For good works, as

we are told in numberless passages of the Bible, are absolutely necessary for salvation. "Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—*Matt.* 3: 10. He therefore who does no good will share the fate of the unfruitful tree; he will be cut down and cast into the fire. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 7: 21. From this we perceive that faith alone does not lead to salvation, acts of love are also required. As the master paid wages only to those who had labored in the vineyard, so God, at the end of their lives, will give heaven as a reward only to those who have served him faithfully. It would be a terrible delusion to believe that in order to be admitted into heaven it would be enough not to do evil; no, no, heaven is the reward of merit, and must be merited by a faithful correspondence to grace, by good works. He who appears without good works before the tribunal of God, will fare like the unprofitable servant in the gospel, who had buried his talent, and who, therefore, was censured by his master and rejected. Let us therefore endeavor by good works to make sure our vocation and election.

2. A merchant must endeavor to find a good market for the goods which his ship carries, for if he cannot sell his goods, they will bring him no profit. In like manner, in our good works we must see that they are pleasing to God, otherwise they remain without merit and reward. But that our works may be meritorious for eternal life—

(*a.*) *Faith* is required, for "without faith it is impossible to please God." – *Heb.* 11: 6. No matter how much good may be done by infidels and free-thinkers, they cannot expect any reward hereafter. Learn from this what you are to think of those who declare that faith is useless and superfluous and that it matters not what a man believes; let him only do right and he will go to heaven. What a delusion! all the good works, and, even if they were such as the whole world would admire, are without value before God unless they proceed from faith. Give thanks daily to God that you are Catholics, for only as such can you have the true faith and be in a position to perform meritorious works.

(*b.*) *The state of grace.* "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine; so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."—*John* 15: 4, 5. Hence, as the branch can bear fruit only when it abides in the vine, from which it receives

life and sap, so we can only bring forth fruit for eternal life, that is, good works, when we are united by sanctifying grace with Jesus and receive from him the power of doing good. How unfortunate are those Christians who for years live in grievous sin! All the good works with which they could acquire merit for themselves if they were in a state of grace, are totally lost for heaven. They resemble foolish men who gather treasures, gold, silver, and precious stones, but throw them into a sack full of holes. Shun, therefore, nothing so much as sin, and if you should ever have the misfortune of losing the grace of God by sin, reinstate yourselves in it without delay by a good confession, that you may be able again to perform meritorious works.

(*c.*) *Pure intention,* or the will to do everything because God wills it, for his love, honor and glory. The Scribes and Pharisees did many good works, but because they had not God in view, his honor and glory, but only themselves, their own honor and the applause of men, Jesus says of them, that they have already received their reward.—*Matt.* 6: 16. He who works hard, but not for God's sake, but only for his livelihood, or to enrich himself; he who prays, goes to church, assists at all devotions, that men may think him a good Christian; he who gives alms in order to be called charitable, he who performs good works, only from temporal motives and thereby sets God aside entirely, need not expect any reward hereafter; for as an employer pays only those who work for him, so God rewards only those with the joys of heaven who do good works for his sake, for his honor and glory, out of obedience and love for him. In all your labors and undertakings and in all your good works be solicitous for nothing so much as for a pure intention; make it in the morning and renew it frequently during the day and endeavor to have it in all your works, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance."—*Col.* 3: 23, 24.

PERORATION.

Remember the three truths which we have considered to-day, and regulate your life accordingly. Your life is as a *passenger ship.* You have no lasting city here. You are emigrants and are on board a ship which conveys you over the ocean of life into eternity. Bear no inordinate affections for anything upon earth, have your final destiny before your eyes, that you may not lose that which is eternal. Your life is a *man-of-war;* as long as you live upon earth you are surrounded by enemies who exert themselves indefatigably to accomplish your ruin; you must therefore

fight. That you may come victorious out of the battle, have recourse to prayer, to the word of God, and to the Blessed Virgin. Your life is a *merchantman;* the goods which have value before God are good works. Be not weary of doing good, for the more good you do *in faith, in a state of grace* and *with a pure intention,* the greater will be your reward hereafter, according to the Apostle: "He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."—*II. Cor.* 9: 6. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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6. MORAL SKETCH.

MEANS FOR OBTAINING THE BLESSING OF GOD.

They enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. —*Luke* 5: 6.

Everything depends on the blessing of God. Peter and his companions had labored all the night, but their labor was in vain. Therefore Peter said to our Lord: *Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing.* But what an unexpected success had the labor of the Apostles, when, at the command of Christ, they let down their net again? They enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, their net broke, and they filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. You certainly wish for the blessing of God in all your labors and undertakings; without it all your labor would be in vain; for "neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."—*I. Cor.* 3: 7. But what is necessary to obtain the blessing of God? *Two means* especially are necessary:

I. Industry with a good intention;
II. Piety and the fear of God.

Part I.

1. *Industry* is necessary for obtaining the blessing of God.

(*a.*) The *Bible* tells us this. Immediately after the fall, God said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that

thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life."—*Gen.* 3: 17. The sin of Adam brought a curse upon the earth, and man must now till it in the sweatof his face, in order to extract from it the necessary subsistence. To him who is idle, the earth, instead of food, will yield thistles and thorns. The blessing of God manifestly therefore is attached to an industrious life. This truth is laid down in the Sacred Scriptures in the plainest words: "The slothful hand hath wrought poverty, but the hand of the industrious getteth riches. . . . He that gathered in the harvest, is a wise son, but he that snorteth in the summer, is the son of confusion."—*Prov.* 10; 4, 5. And again: "In much work there shall be abundance, but where there are many words, there is oftentimes want."—*Prov.* 14: 23. And St. Paul writes: "This we declared to you; that if any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we have heard that there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling. Now we charge them that are such, and beseech them by the Lord Jesus Christ, that, working with silence, they would eat their own bread."—*II. Thess.* 3: 10-12. The Apostle forbids idleness to the Christians at Thessalonica, and exhorts them to work diligently, because this is the only way in which you must seek your livelihood in this world and so gain the blessing of God.

(*b.*) *Reason* tells us this. A hermit one day came to the Abbot Silvanus, who lived on Mount Sion, and said to the monks, whom he saw at work: "Why do you labor so hard for the sake of perishable food? Has not Mary chosen the better part?" St. Silvanus said to his disciple Zachary: "Give the hermit a book, that he may entertain himself, and show him into his cell." When it was three o'clock in the afternoon the hermit expected that the Abbot would call him to dinner, but in vain. Being at length tormented by hunger, he went to the Abbot and said to him: "My father, did not the brothers dine to-day?" "Yes," replied the Abbot. "Why did you not call me to table?" he asked. The Abbot said: "It was omitted because you are entirely a spiritual man, who has chosen the better part, and because you spend the whole day in praying and reading, and consequently do not need such perishable food, whilst we who are of flesh cannot live without eating, and this compels us to work." The hermit acknowledged his error and went to work with the rest of the brothers. It is good to pray and meditate, nay, even necessary, but it is not sufficient for the support of our bodies; we must also work. If a farmer lets his field lie fallow, in vain does he expect a crop; if an artisan does not attend to the trade by which he is to earn his living, there will soon be want in his house. God is ready to bless us and to give us what is necessary for our subsistence,

but he wills that we labor diligently. He works no miracles for the support of laziness.

2. But that God many accompany our labors and projects with his blessing, they must be done for *his honor, or with a good intention.* We are created to honor and glorify God, as he says himself: "I have created him (man) for my glory."—*Is.* 43: 7. Therefore the Apostle admonishes us to do all things for the glory of God: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31. Because the glory of God is our chief end, Jesus taught us to say: "Hallowed be thy name." Now if we perform our labors and business with the intention of glorifying and honoring God, of showing him our adoration, obedience and love, his blessing will not be wanting to us. Examples:

(*a.*) *Judith* conceived the heroic resolution of delivering her city from destruction. God blessed her undertaking so as to bring it to a favorable issue. Why? On account of her good intention. God would be glorified by her deed, and all nations, would acknowledge that the God of Israel alone is the true God, and adore and worship him. She prayed thus: "O God of the heavens . . . hear me, a poor wretch, making supplication to thee, and presuming of thy mercy. Remember, O Lord, thy covenant, and put thou words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart, that thy house may continue in thy holiness, and all nations may acknowledge that thou art God, and there is no other besides thee."—*Judith* 9: 17-19. Penetrated with such an intention, having nothing but the honor of God for its object, she pushes through the Assyrian camp, cuts off the head of Holofernes, and averts misery and ruin from Bethulia and her country.

(*b.*) *David.* I see a man go out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, whose height is six cubits and a span, according to our measure from nine to ten feet; he has a helmet of brass upon his head, and he is clothed with scale armor, and the weight of his coat of mail alone is a hundred pounds; and the staff of his spear is like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighs more than twelve pounds. And this giant plants himself opposite the army of Israel, and cries out: "Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand. If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, we will be servants to you; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, you shall be servants, and shall serve us." Saul and all the Israelites hearing these words of the Philistine were dismayed and greatly afraid, and no one dared to accept the challenge. David alone presents himself for the contest; he had scarcely entered the age of man-

hood; he had nothing manly about him; he resembled a boy more than a warrior. His weapons were a staff, which he had always in his hand, a shepherd's scrip, a sling and five smooth pebbles taken from the brook. Thus he went forth against the Philistine. "And when the Philistine looked, and beheld David, he despised him, and said: Am I a dog, that thou comest to with a staff?" Who does not tremble for the life of David in this unequal combat? Who can hope that David, the boy, will conquer Goliath, the giant? And yet he conquered. "He put his hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling; and fetching it about struck the Philistine on the forehead, and the stone was fixed in his forehead, and he fell on his face upon the earth." David, having no sword of his own, took the Philistine's and cut off his head. Whence this wonderful victory of David? From God, because he undertook the combat for the glory of God. David said to Goliath: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied this day; and the Lord will deliver thee into my hands; and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.—*I. Kings* 17.

Think of the *Machabees*, who fought so successfully for the liberation of their country; of the *Jews*, who after their return from the captivity of Babylon, rebuilt the temple and Jerusalem; of the *Apostles*, who in a short time converted many thousand Jews and Gentiles to the faith of Jesus Christ. God blessed their combats, their labors and sufferings, because they had the glory of God in view. You also may expect the blessing of God most certainly if, by a good intention, you make your cause God's cause.

PART II.

Piety and the fear of God are also necessary means for obtaining the divine blessing.

(*a.*) *The word of God* teaches this. Nothing is more frequently inculcated in the Bible than piety and the fear of the Lord, that he may look down upon us favorably and make us prosperous. Thus we read in the first Psalm of David: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he

shall do shall prosper."—*Ps.* 1-3. Again the Psalmist says: "The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor, he shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour."—*Ps.* 23: 4, 5. "The blessing of God maketh haste to reward the just, and in a swift hour his blessing beareth fruit."—*Ecclus.* 11: 24. And Christ says: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Matt.* 6: 33. In these words our Lord assures us, that if we are solicitous for the salvation of our soul, and lead a Christian life, all things whatsoever we need for our temporal welfare will be given to us in addition.

(*b.*) *History* tells us. We know that Joseph, the son of the patriarch Jacob, was persecuted by his own brothers and sold as a slave into Egypt. Joseph remained pious and virtuous in Egypt. Tempted by the wife of his master to a most abominable deed, he did not consent, but said: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"—*Gen.* 39: 9. Because Joseph was so pious and virtuous, he prospered in all he did. "And the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man in all things; . . . and the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, and multiplied all his substance, both at home and in the fields" —*Gen.* 39: 2-5. How piety and virtue drew down the blessing of God, the history of the old and the young Tobias teaches us. God was with Tobias also in a foreign country, caused him to find grace with the king and blessed all his steps. He even sent an angel, who bestowed great benefits on his son, and healed him himself from blindness. Lastly, sacred history relates that young Tobias inherited all the property of his rich father-in-law; that he saw his children's children to the fifth generation; that he lived to a very advanced age, and that his posterity persevered in piety and the fear of the Lord. You see here with your own eyes how right St. Paul is, when he says: "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—*I. Tim.* 4: 8.

(*c.*) *Experience* teaches it. In every community there are families who really possess all things that are required for a happy life upon earth. Their business, their trade flourishes, their agriculture prospers, whatever they undertake has a favorable issue. Though they do not possess great riches, they always have sufficient money for the ordinary wants of life, and as their condition, improves from year to year, they acquire so much that their children can be well provided for. Peace and concord reign among them; all are devoted to one another, everything runs smoothly and they themselves, with a grateful look to heaven,

acknowledge that they are contented and happy. Now what is the source from which such prosperity and blessings are derived? It is no other than *virtue and piety*. It is well known that these families are well-grounded in Christian principles. Father and mother conscientiously fulfil the duties of their religion and state of life, and set the best example to those under their charge; they look after those entrusted to them, and see that they behave well. The children are good, live a retired life, pray, and behave themselves so modestly that every good person is pleased with them. It is upon such families that the eye of God rests with special pleasure and the words of Solomon are verified: "The habitations of the just shall be blessed."—*Prov.* 3; 33. It is true, I know, that sometimes also the unjust and sinners are prosperous, and everything goes according to their wishes, but their happiness is not of long duration; sooner or later God will withdraw his hand from them, if they do not cease to offend him, and they will be delivered to misery and perdition. Listen to what David says: "I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus; and I passed by, and lo! he was not, and I sought him, and his place was not found."—*Ps.* 36: 35, 36. In like manner God sends crosses, tribulations and calamities to the just, as we know he did to Job, Tobias and many others, but they do not last long. God only proves their virtue by these trials, and afterwards blesses them again the more abundantly. Thus it is said expressly of Job, that God in the latter end blessed him more than in the beginning. And though the probation of the just should last all their lifetime, they are nevertheless not to be pitied, for hereafter they will be recompensed a thousand-fold for all that they have suffered here. "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—*II. Cor.* 4: 17.

PERORATION.

Be not only industrious and active, but also pious and virtuous, for one is as necessary as the other, that in your labors and undertakings you may receive a blessing from above. If things do not prosper with you; if you are visited with various tribulations; if your domestic affairs are not satisfactory examine and see whether you are not the cause of the want of the divine blessing. Perhaps you are careless and negligent in your business, perhaps you are too extravagant, perhaps you have not a good intention in your labors and undertakings, perhaps you do not live piously, neglect your religious duties, commit injustices and other sins. If that is the case, be not astonished and do not com-

plain when God withdraws his blessing from you: remove rather the obstacles which are in the way thereof, and do what is required on your part to receive it. "Use your endeavor to be quiet and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands" (*I. Thess.* 4: 11), live piously and virtuously; then God will accompany all your actions with his blessing here, and reward you hereafter with the everlasting goods of heaven. Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

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7. MORAL SKETCH.

ON PURITY OF INTENTION.

Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net.—Luke 5: 5.

The Apostles let down their nets twice in order to catch fish; the first time, at night; the second time, at the command of their divine Lord, in daylight. The first time their labor was in vain; not a fish went into their net; wherefore St. Peter said: *Master, we have labored all the night.* How successful was their work when they let down the nets the second time! They enclosed so great a multitude of fishes that their net broke, and they filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. In this event you have a picture of men who perform their labors and good works with or without a pure intention. Those who have no good intention in their labors resemble the Apostles fishing all night; their labor is fruitless. But those who do everything with a pure intention resemble the Apostles when they let down the nets the second time. Their steps are blessed by God and rewarded. Since a pure intention has great influence upon our actions, I shall speak of it to-day, and explain to you—

I. What is required for purity of intention;
II. What an important thing it is.

PART I.

For *purity of intention* it is required—

1. *That it be directed to God.* In all that we do we must have the purpose or intention to serve and honor God. The Apostle wills it so, when he says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."—*I. Cor.* 10: 31. We are created to serve God. We must have this before our eyes in all our actions. If you ask a servant at his work: Why do you do this?- he will say, Because my employer wishes it. In like manner as servants of God we must be able to say with truth in all our works: I do this for God, because God wills it. We are created to honor God, therefore Christ teaches us to say at the beginning of the "Our Father", "hallowed be thy name." The maxim of St. Ignatius, *All for the greater glory of God,* must be the motive of all our actions. If, in any action, we seek not the glory of God, but our own glory, we commit an injustice against God, because we do not attribute to him what is due to him.

Our intention, however, is pure when it refers only secondarily to God. This is the case, for instance, when, in our labors and good works, we have primarily the intention of atoning for our sins, of obtaining graces and benefits from God and of meriting heaven. Here the pure intention does not refer primarily, but secondarily to God, for it aims at something that is pleasing to him. When we labor in order to get along honestly in the world, because we are taught by faith that such is the will of God, our intention again refers to God secondarily and is good. The more we leave out ourselves and all earthly things in our actions, doing them for the love of God, the better is our intention, and the greater therefore also our merit. God, however, does not reject good works altogether into which our self-love creeps somewhat, but only in so far as they are faulty; he does with them as we do with an apple that has a decayed part, we cut out the rotten portion, but eat what is still good.

2. *That our actions be good or at least indifferent.* Bad actions cannot become good or acceptable to God and meritorious by a pure intention; they are bad, and remain bad. Therefore St. Paul forbids us to do evil that good may come of it. And St. Augustine says: "What is sin in itself cannot by a pure intention become a virtue." Here many are in great error. When by a sinful act they can avert an evil or do some good, they imagine it to be no sin. Thus they allow themselves to tell a lie to avoid some

unpleasantness; servants steal from their employers one thing or another in order to give it to the poor; some even take a false oath, in order to help an acquaintance out of a difficulty. What a dangerous self-delusion! I repeat it, we are never allowed, for any reason or under any circumstances whatever, to do evil that good may come of it. Sin is so great an evil in the eyes of God, that we must not allow ourselves to tell the smallest lie, if thereby we could save the whole world from perdition.

3. *That we are in a state of grace.* Mortal sin is for the supernatural or spiritual life what death is for the life of our bodies. Death deprives man of the life of his body and renders every action absolutely impossible. In like manner mortal sin robs man of the supernatural life and disables him from doing anything meritorious for eternity. As the branch severed from the vine can bear no fruit, so Christians who have separated themselves from God by sin can yield no fruit for eternal life. Therefore Christ himself says: "I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing."—*John* 15: 5. St. Paul says: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—*I. Cor.* 13: 3. To have charity, and to be in a state of grace, are one and the same thing. He who is in a state of sin, though he may perform the most heroic actions, give his whole substance in alms, and die a martyr, derives therefrom no advantage; he can expect no reward hereafter. Should Christians in a state of sin daily offer up their labors and good works and often say: "Lord, all for thy love," their pure intention will be of no benefit to them; all their works are lost for heaven. What an injury do Christians inflict upon themselves who live in sin for a long time, perhaps the greater part of their life!

4. *Finally, that we receive the assistance of divine grace.* The pure intention is something supernatural because it refers to our eternal salvation. It consists in this, that we wish to honor God by good works, to please him, and to attain heaven. With our human powers we cannot accomplish anything supernatural, because we have not the ability for it. If any one should demand of us to lift ourselves up and fly like a bird, we should say to him: I cannot do it, my nature is not fitted for that. We must give the same answer to him who requires us to make a pure intention of ourselves; we should be obliged to say to him: I cannot do that; that surpasses my natural strength. Therefore the Apostle says: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."—*II.*

Cor. 3: 5. God will grant the necessary grace to make a pure intention if you fervently pray for it, for Christ says in general terms: "Ask, and it shall be given you."—*Luke* 11: 9. At the same time, you must be humble, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—*James* 4: 6.

PART II.

You will be convinced of the importance of a pure intention when you consider that on it depends the *merit*

1. *Of good works.* Those works are called good which are conformable to the will of God. If we observe the commandments of God and of the Church, practise the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, pray, fast, give alms, make use of the means of our holy religion, we are doing good works. But that these good works may become meritorious before God, that is, that by the exercise of them we may merit an increase of sanctifying grace, and eternal salvation, a pure intention is indispensable. Even the best prepared dishes are insipid, and we do not relish them if they are not seasoned with salt; the most beautifully executed document has no value without seal and signature. What salt is to food, seal and signature to a document, the pure intention is to good works; if that is lacking, all our works are without merit before God. How much depends on the good intention we see—

(*a.*) *From the Bible.* Christ says: "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome."—*Matt.* 6: 22, 23. The holy Fathers say: "The eye is the sentiment of the heart or the intention with which we perform our actions." If this sentiment or intention is pure and good, it makes all good works acceptable to God; but if it is bad, it makes all good works displeasing to God. Therefore the value of all exercises of virtue and good works depends on the pure intention. The Scribes and Pharisees did a great deal of good; they were zealous in preaching the divine law, they visited the temple frequently, they said long prayers, they not only kept the prescribed fasts, but also imposed voluntary ones upon themselves, and gave abundant alms. And yet Christ says of them: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* 5: 20. Why did Christ declare the justice of the Pharisees to be insufficient for the kingdom ofheaven? Chiefly, because in all their good works and pious exercises, they lacked a pure intention. Our Saviour gives us to understand this, in the words: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not

have a reward of your Father, who is in heaven."—*Matt.* 6: 1 6: 1. On the other hand, Christ assures us that quite indifferent works are rewarded by God in heaven, when performed with a good intention. "Whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ; Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."—*Mark* 9: 40. What consolation that we can merit heaven by such insignificant works.

(*b.*) *From the utterances and the lives of the Saints.* "He who does good works out of ostentation, or with a view of pleasing men, resembles him who continually draws water, but pours it into a sieve," said St. Arsenius. "If we should suffer martyrdom with a view of being praised and admired by the brethren, our blood would be shed in vain."—*St. Jerome.* Many hermits in the desert occupied themselves with making baskets, and they usually made one each day. A young hermit, in order to be praised, worked so hard that he finished two. St. Pachomius, who discovered the bad intention of this hermit, said at the meeting of the brethren in the evening: "Behold, this brother has, from early in the morning till late in the evening, done less than nothing; for, seeking in his work only his own praise, he has labored in the service of the devil, and sacrified to him all his sweat.

2. *Of the duties of the state of life.* To this belong all labors and occupations that every man is obliged to perform according to his respective state of life, such as the labors of business men, artisans and farmers. The good intention makes all these labors meritorious. When the artisan plies the axe, the trowel, the hammer, and offers up to God all his trouble and labor, he can gain heaven. When the farmer, in the field and the meadow, bears the heat and the burden of the day, splits wood, works in the barn, and does this for God's sake, he may promise to himself an eternal reward. When the woman, sweeping the room and doing the housework, has the glory of God in view, she can earn thereby an eternal reward. There is indeed something great about a pure intention. The poets say of Midas, the king of the Phrygians, that whatever he touched was changed into gold. If you possessed such a power, I have no doubt you would touch now a stone, now a piece of wood, in order to get gold. Now see, a pure intention makes all your works more precious than gold, for you cannot purchase heaven with gold, but you can with good, meritorious works.

What a pity that many are found who perform their labors and other business without a pure intention! They weave, says the prophet, "webs of spiders," and "their works are unprofitable." —*Is.* 59: 5, 6. The spider works till it has spent itself, but what does its work profit? It spins to catch only miserable flies, and

to weave a web which can be destroyed by the weakest hand. Those who have no pure intention at their work resemble spiders. They trouble themselves much and long, and receive for it nothing but miserable earthly goods, which do not satisfy the heart, and which at the hour of death, and often before that, disappear and vanish like smoke. St. Bernard says: "Whatever you do is vain, that only excepted which you do for God's sake, for God's honor." I really pity those who work for many years, yes, their whole lifetime, and take rest neither by day nor by night, but from earthly motives, without even a passing thought of God, without offering up to him their labors and fatigues. Foolish men! on the last day they will fare no better than the idle servant who buried his talent in the earth.

3. *Of the indifferent works.* Those works are called indifferent which, of themselves, are neither good nor bad, as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, enjoying an innocent recreation. Even those lower works which we have in common with animals become meritorious for heaven by a good intention. Potatoes are a very common food, and constitute the nourishment of the poor, but the daintiest dishes are made out of them, and they grace even the tables of king when they are prepared with precious condiments and other good ingredients. But, what condiments and precious ingredients are to potatoes, the pure intention is to indifferent works, for though these in themselves are so common and insignificant, yet by the pure intention they become so precious that even God, the King of heaven and earth, relishes them and rewards them in heaven.

The saints were well aware of this, and therefore they were very solicitous to make even the most common actions meritorious before God by a pure intention. Thus Job says that he sighed whenever he ate; David, that he was watering his meat and drink with tears. What intention had these saints? No other than by these salutary exercises and by pious aspirations to God, or what amounts to the same, by a pure intention, to change the indifferent works of eating and drinking into works of virtue and merit. Here I must remark that actions which in themselves are indifferent are no longer indifferent when they are done by some one, but are either good or bad, and therefore deserve either reward or punishment. If, in performing indifferent actions, you lack the pure intention, they displease God and draw punishment after them.

PERORATION.

A pure intention is a very important matter; our eternal salvation depends on it, because all our actions are regulated by it.

If we have a pure intention, all our works, not only the good, but also the indifferent ones, as well as our labors and occupations, become meritorious for eternity; but if we have not a pure intention, all our works, even the very best, are without merit, and may even deserve the displeasure of God, and punishment. See then that a pure intention is not wanting to your works, that you may become rich in merits for eternity and hear out of the mouth of the divine Judge the consoling words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—*Matt.* 25: 21. Amen.

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